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ESSAYS
SPECULATIVE AND POLITICAL

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

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ESSAYS
SPECULATIVE AND POLITICAL

BY THE
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PREFACE

In this volume I have collected Essays, Lectures and some occasional pieces written during the last twelve years. They touch on subjects of the most varied character, ranging from a revue of M. Bergson's *L'Evolution Créatrice* to brief Notes on "Zionism" and "The Freedom of the Seas." I do not expect, I need hardly say, that even the most friendly reader will take an interest in them all; though perhaps he may, here and there, find something to meet his individual tastes.

I have roughly divided them into groups, about one of which a special word of explanation and apology is perhaps necessary—the group relating to Germany. Of these the first in date is an article on Anglo-German relations, written at the request of Professor Dr. Ludwig Stein in 1912 for the well-known periodical *Nord und Süd;* the second is a review of Treitschke's Lectures on "Politics"; the third is the Note on "The Freedom of the Seas" already referred to; and the last is a reprint of the Official Dispatch on the Allied objects in the War

which I wrote in January 1917. Of these the first was written entirely for German readers; the third, in the main, for American friends; while the fourth was the British reply to President Wilson's request for a statement of the objects of the Entente Powers in the War. All these Papers were occasional, and one of them was official; but, in a certain sense, they form a series representing the contemporary thoughts of at least one individual concerned with the various stages in the great drama which ended in June 1919.

To some readers the Paper of 1912 may seem lacking in the emphasis of its warnings. But it was written, as I have already said, for the German public, at the request of a German editor, who, without doubt, sincerely desired to improve the relations between Germany and Britain. The object was a laudable one, with which I heartily sympathised; and it certainly would not have been promoted by the adoption of too controversial a tone.

As the interest of some of these Papers, if they have any interest, depends in part upon the date at which they were written, I have in no case altered the sense of the text, though here and there I have made slight verbal improvements.

My thanks are due to the Editors of the various

books and journals in which any of these Essays may have originally appeared for permission to republish them.

A. J. B.

WHITTINGEHAME,
October, 1920

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PART ONE: SPECULATIVE

I: DECADENCE

I

DECADENCE [1]

I MUST begin what I have to say with a warning and an apology. I must warn you that the present essay makes no pretence to be an adequate treatment of some compact and limited theme; but rather resembles those wandering trains of thought, where we allow ourselves the luxury of putting wide-ranging questions, to which our ignorance forbids any confident reply. I apologise for adopting a course which thus departs in some measure from familiar precedent. I admit its perils. But it is just possible that when a subject, or group of subjects, is of great inherent interest, even a tentative and interrogative treatment of it may be worth attempting.

My subject, or at least my point of departure, is Decadence. I do not mean the sort of decadence often attributed to certain phases of artistic or literary development, in which an overwrought technique, straining to express sentiments

[1] Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture, delivered at Newnham College, January 25, 1908.

too subtle or too morbid, is deemed to have supplanted the direct inspiration of an earlier and a simpler age. Whether these autumnal glories, these splendours touched with death, are recurring phenomena in the literary cycle; whether, if they be, they are connected with other forms of decadence, may be questions well worth asking and answering. But they are not the questions with which I am at present concerned. The decadence respecting which I wish to put questions is not specifically literary or artistic. It is the decadence which attacks, or is alleged to attack, great communities and historic civilisations: which is to societies of men what senility is to man, and is often, like senility, the precursor and the cause of final dissolution.

It is curious how deeply imbedded in ordinary discourse are traces of the conviction that childhood, maturity, and old age are stages in the corporate, as they are in the individual, life. "A young and vigorous nation," "a decrepit and moribund civilisation"—phrases like these, and scores of others containing the same implication, come as trippingly from the tongue as if they suggested no difficulty and called for no explanation. To Macaulay (unless I am pressing his famous metaphor too far) it seemed natural that ages hence a young country like New Zealand should be

flourishing, but not less natural that an old country like England should have decayed; Berkeley, in a well-known stanza, tells how the drama of civilisation has slowly travelled westward to find its loftiest development, but also its final catastrophe, in the New World; while every man who is weary, hopeless, or disillusioned talks as if his unhappy case was due to the decadent epoch in which his lot was cast.

But why *should* civilisations thus wear out and great communities decay? and what evidence is there that, in fact, they do? These questions, though I cannot give to them any conclusive answers, are of much more than a merely theoretic interest. For if current modes of speech take Decadence for granted, with still greater confidence do they speak of Progress as assured. Yet if both are real they can hardly be studied apart, they must evidently limit and qualify each other in actual experience, and they cannot be isolated in speculation.

Though antiquity, Pagan and Christian, took a different view, it seems easier, *a priori,* to understand Progress than Decadence. Even if Progress be arrested, as presumably it must be, by the limitation of human faculty, we should expect the ultimate boundary to be capable of indefinite approach, and we should *not* expect that any part of

the road towards it, once traversed, would have to be retraced. Even in the organic world, decay and death, familiar though they be, are phenomena that call for scientific explanation. And Weismann has definitely asked how it comes about that the higher organisms grow old and die, seeing that old age and death are not inseparable characteristics of living protoplasm, and that the simplest organisms suffer no natural decay, perishing, when they do perish, by accident, starvation, or specific disease.

The answer he gives to his own question is that the death of the individual is so useful to the race, that Natural Selection has, in all but the very lowest species, exterminated the potentially immortal.

One is tempted to inquire whether this ingenious explanation could be so modified as to apply not merely to individuals, but to communities. Is it needful, in the interests of civilisation as a whole, that the organised embodiment of each particular civilisation, if and when its free development is arrested, should make room for younger and more vigorous competitors? And if so can we find in Natural Selection the mechanism by which the principle of decay and dissolution shall be so implanted in the very nature of human socie-

ties as to secure that a due succession among them shall always be maintained?

To this second question the answer must, I think, be in the negative. The struggle for existence between different races and different societies has admittedly played a great part in social development. But the extension of Weismann's idea from the organic to the social world, would imply a prolonged competition between groups of communities in which decadence was the rule and groups in which it was not—ending in the survival of the first and the destruction of the second. The groups whose members suffered periodical decadence and dissolution would be the fittest to survive: just as, on Weismann's theory, those species which are constantly replacing the old by the young have an advantage in the competitive struggle.

Few, however, will say that in the petty fragment of human history which alone is open to our inspection, there is satisfactory evidence of any such long drawn process. Some may even be disposed to ask whether there is adequate evidence of such a phenomenon as decadence at all. And it must be acknowledged that the affirmative answer should be given with caution. Evidently we must not consider a diminution of national power, whether relative or absolute, as constituting by itself a proof of national decadence. Holland is not decadent

because her place in the hierarchy of European Powers is less exalted than it was two hundred and fifty years ago. Spain was not necessarily decadent at the end of the seventeenth century because she had exhausted herself in a contest far beyond her resources either in money or in men. It would, I think, be rash even to say that Venice was decadent at the end of the eighteenth century, though the growth of other Powers, and the diversion of the great trade routes, had shorn her of wealth and international influence. These are misfortunes which in the sphere of sociology correspond to accident or disease in the sphere of biology. And what we are concerned to know is whether in the sphere of sociology there is also anything corresponding to the decay of old age—a decay which may be hastened by accident or disease, but is certainly to be distinguished from both.

However this question should be answered the cases I have cited are sufficient to show where the chief difficulty of the inquiry lies. Decadence, even if it be a reality, never acts in isolation. It is always complicated with, and often acts through, other more obvious causes. It is always therefore possible to argue that to these causes, not to the more elusive influences collectively described as "decadence," the decline and fall of great communities is really due.

Yet there are historic tragedies which (as it seems to me) do most obstinately refuse to be thus simply explained. It is in vain that historians enumerate the public calamities which preceded, and no doubt contributed to, the final catastrophe. Civil dissensions, military disasters, pestilences, famines, tyrants, tax-gatherers, growing burdens and waning wealth—the gloomy catalogue is unrolled before our eyes, yet somehow it does not in all cases wholly satisfy us; we feel that some of these diseases are of a kind which a vigorous body politic should easily be able to survive, that others are secondary symptoms of some obscurer malady, and that in neither case do they supply us with the full explanations of which we are in search.

Consider, for instance, the long agony and final destruction of Roman Imperialism in the West, the most momentous catastrophe of which we have historic record. It has deeply stirred the imagination of mankind, it has been the theme of great historians, it has been much explained by political philosophers, yet who feels that either historians or philosophers have laid bare the real secrets of the tragedy? Rome fell, and great was the fall of it. But why it fell, by what secret mines its defences were breached, and what made its garrison so faint-hearted and ineffectual—this is by no means clear.

In order to measure adequately the difficulty of the problem, let us abstract our minds from historical details and compare the position of the Empire about the middle of the second century with its position in the middle of the third or again at the end of the fourth, and ask of what forces history gives us an account, sufficient in these periods to effect so mighty a transformation. Or, still better, imagine an observer equipped with our current stock of political wisdom, transported to Rome in the reign of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius, and in ignorance of the event, writing letters to the newspapers on the future destinies of the Empire. What would his forecast be?

We might suppose him to examine, in the first place, the military position of the State, its probable enemies, its capacities for defence. He would note that only on its eastern boundary was there an organised military Power capable of meeting Rome on anything like equal terms, and this only in the regions adjacent to their common frontier. For the rest, he would discover no civilised enemy along the southern boundary to the Atlantic or along its northern boundary from the Black Sea to the German Ocean. Warlike tribes indeed he would find in plenty: difficult to crush within the limits of their native forests and morasses, formidable it may be in a raid, but without political

cohesion, military unity, or the means of military concentration; troublesome, therefore, rather than dangerous. If reminded of Varus and his lost legions, he would ask of what importance, in the story of a world-power, could be the loss of a few thousand men surprised at a distance from their base amid the entanglements of a difficult and unknown country? Never, it would seem, was Empire more fortunately circumstanced for purposes of home defence.

But (it might be thought) the burden of securing frontiers of such length, even against merely tribal assaults, though easy from a strictly military point of view, might prove too heavy to be long endured. Yet the military forces scattered through the Roman Empire, though apparently adequate in the days of her greatness, would, according to modern ideas, seem hardly sufficient for purposes of police, let alone defence. An army corps or less was deemed enough to preserve what are now mighty kingdoms from internal disorder and external aggression. And if we compare with this the contributions, either in the way of money or of men, exacted from Mediterranean lands before the Empire came into being, or at any period of the world's history since it dissolved away, the comparison must, I suppose, be entirely in favour of the Empire.

But burdens which seem light if measured by area may be heavy if measured by ability to pay. Yet when has ability to pay been greater in the regions bordering the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean than under the Roman Empire? Travel round it in imagination eastward from the Atlantic coast of Morocco till returning westward you reach the head of the Adriatic Gulf, and you will have skirted a region, still of immense natural wealth, once filled with great cities and fertile farms, better governed during the Empire than it has ever been governed since (at least till Algeria was ruled by the French and Egypt by the British); including among its provinces what were great states before the Roman rule, and have been great states since that rule decayed, divided by no international jealousies, oppressed by no fear of conquest, enterprising, cultured. Remember that to estimate its area of taxation and recruiting you must add to these regions Bulgaria, Servia, much of Austria and Bavaria, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain, and most of Britain, and you have conditions favourable to military strength and economic prosperity rarely equalled in the modern world and never in the ancient.

Our observer however might, very rightly, feel that a far-spreading Empire like that of Rome, including regions profoundly differing in race,

history, and religion, would be liable to other dangers than those which arise from mere external aggression. One of the first questions, therefore, which he would be disposed to ask, is whether so heterogeneous a state was not in perpetual danger of dissolution through the disintegrating influence of national sentiments. He would learn, probably with a strong feeling of surprise, that with the single exception of the Jews, its constituent nations, once conquered, were not merely content to be parts of the Empire, but could scarcely imagine themselves as anything else; that the Imperial system appealed, not merely to the material needs of the component populations, but also to their imagination and their loyalty; that Gaul, Spain, and Britain, though but recently forced within the pale of civilisation, were as faithful to the Imperial ideal as the Greeks of Athens or the Hellenised Orientals of Syria; and that neither historic memories, nor local patriotism, nor disputed successions, nor public calamities, nor administrative divisions, ever really shook the sentiment in favour of Imperial Unity. There might be more than one Emperor, but there could only be one Empire. Howsoever our observer might disapprove of the Imperial system he would therefore have to admit that the Empire, with all its shortcomings, its absolutism, and its bureaucracy,

had solved more successfully than any government, before or since, the problem of devising a scheme which equally satisfied the sentiments of East and West; which respected local feelings, and encouraged local government; in which the Celt, the Iberian, the Berber, the Egyptian, the Asiatic, the Greek, the Illyrian, the Italian were all at home, and which, though based on conquest, was accepted by the conquered as the natural organisation of the civilised world.

Rome had thus unique sources of strength. What sources of weakness would our observer be likely to detect behind her imposing exterior? The diminution of population is the one which has (rightly I think) most impressed historians; and it is difficult to resist the evidence, either of the fact or of its disastrous consequences. I hesitate indeed to accept without qualification the accounts given us of the progressive decay of the native Italian stock from the days of the Gracchi to the disintegration of the Empire in the West; and when we read how the dearth of men was made good (in so far as it was made good) by the increasing inflow of slaves and adventurers from every corner of the known world, one wonders *whose* sons they were who, for three centuries and more, so brilliantly led the van of modern European culture, as it emerged from the darkness of

the early Middle Ages. Passing by such collateral issues, however, and admitting depopulation to have been both real and serious, we may well ask whether it was not the result of Roman decadence rather than its cause—the symptom of some deep-seated social malady, not its origin. We are not concerned here with the aristocracy of Rome, nor even with the people of Italy. We are concerned with the Empire. We are not concerned with a passing phase or fashion, but with a process which seems to have gone on with increasing rapidity, through good times as well as bad, till the final cataclysm. A local disease might have a local explanation, a transient disease might be due to a chance coincidence. But what can we say of a disease which was apparently co-extensive with Imperial civilisation in area, and which exceeded it in duration?

I find it hard to believe that either a selfish aversion to matrimony or a mystical admiration for celibacy, though at certain periods the one was common in Pagan and the other in Christian circles, were more than elements in the complex of causes by which the result was brought about. Like the plagues which devastated Europe in the second and third centuries, they must have greatly aggravated the evil, but they are hardly sufficient to account for it. Nor yet can we find an explana-

tion of it in the sense of impending doom, by which men's spirits were oppressed long before the Imperial power began visibly to wane; for this is one of the things which, if historically true, does itself most urgently require explanation.

It may be, however, that our wandering politician would be too well grounded in Malthusian economics to regard a diminution of population as in itself an overwhelming calamity. And if he were pressed to describe the weak spots in the Empire of the Antonines he would be disposed, I think, to look for them on the ethical rather than on the military, the economic, or the strictly political sides of social life. He would be inclined to say, as in effect Mr. Lecky does say, that in the institution of slavery, in the brutalities of the gladiatorial shows, in the gratuitous distribution of bread to urban mobs, are to be found the corrupting influences which first weakened and then destroyed the vigour of the State.

I confess that I cannot easily accept this analysis of the facts. As regards the gladiatorial shows, even had they been universal throughout the Empire, and had they flourished more rankly as its power declined, I should still have questioned the propriety of attributing too far-reaching effects to such a cause. The Romans were brutal while they were conquering the world: its conquest

enabled them to be brutal with ostentation; but we must not measure the ill consequences of their barbaric tastes by the depth of our own disgusts, nor assume the Gothic invasions to be the natural and fitting Nemesis of so much spectacular shedding of innocent blood.

As for the public distributions of corn, one would wish to have more evidence as to its social effects. But even without fully accepting the theory of the latest Italian historian of ancient Rome who believes that, under the then prevailing conditions of transport, no very large city could exist in antiquity if the supply of its food were left to private enterprise, we cannot seriously regard this practice, strange as it seems to us, as an important element in the problem. Granting for the sake of argument that it demoralised the mob of Rome, it must be remembered that Rome was not the Empire, nor did the mob of Rome govern the Empire as once it had governed the Republic.

Slavery is a far more important matter. The magnitude of its effects on ancient societies, difficult as these are to disentangle, can hardly be exaggerated. But with what plausibility can we find in it the cause of Rome's decline, seeing that it was the concomitant also of its rise? How can that which in antiquity was common to all states have this exceptional and malign influence upon

one? It would not in any case be easy to accept such a theory; but surely it becomes impossible when we bear in mind the enormous improvement effected under the Empire both in the law and the practice of slavery. Great as were its evils, they were diminishing evils—less ruinous as time went on to the character of the master, less painful and degrading to the slave. Who can believe that this immemorial custom could, in its decline, destroy a civilisation which, in its vigour, it had helped to create?

Of course our observer would see much in the social system he was examining which he would rightly regard as morally detestable and politically pernicious. But the real question before him would not be "are these things good or bad?" but "are these things getting better or getting worse?" And surely in most cases he would be obliged to answer "getting better." Many things moreover would come under his notice fitted to move his admiration in a much less qualified manner. Few governments have been more anxious to foster an alien and higher culture than was the Roman Government to foster Greek civilisation. In so far as Rome inherited what Alexander conquered, it carried out the ideal which Alexander had conceived. In few periods have the rich been readier to spend of their private fortunes on public ob-

jects. There never was a community in which associations for every purpose of mutual aid or enjoyment sprang more readily into existence. There never was a military monarchy less given to wars of aggression. There never was an age in which there was a more rapid advance in humanitarian ideals, or a more anxious seeking after spiritual truth. Education was well endowed, and its professors held in high esteem. Physical culture was cared for. Law was becoming scientific. Research was not forgotten. What more could be reasonably expected?

According to our ordinary methods of analysis it is not easy to say what more *could* be reasonably expected. But plainly much more was required. In a few generations from the time of which I am speaking the Empire lost its extraordinary power of assimilating alien and barbaric elements. It became too feeble either to absorb or to expel them; and the immigrants who in happier times might have bestowed renewed vigour on the commonwealth, became, in the hour of its decline, a weakness and a peril. Poverty grew as population shrank. Municipal office, once so eagerly desired, became the most cruel of burdens. Associations connected with industry or commerce, which began by freely exchanging public service for public privilege, found their members sub-

jected to ever increasing obligations, for the due performance of which they and their children were liable in person and in property. Thus while Christianity, and the other forces that made for mercy, were diminishing the slavery of the slave, the needs of the Bureaucracy compelled it to trench ever more and more upon the freedom of the free. It was each man's duty (so ran the argument) to serve the commonwealth: he could best serve the commonwealth by devoting himself to his calling if it were one of public necessity: this duty he should be required under penalties to perform, and to devote if necessary to its performance labour to the limits of endurance, fortune to the last shilling, and family to the remotest generation. Through this crude experiment in socialism, the civilised world seemed to be rapidly moving towards a system of universal caste, imposed by no immemorial custom, supported by no religious scruple, but forced on an unwilling people by the Emperor's edict and the executioner's lash.

These things have severally and collectively been regarded as the causes why in the West the Imperial system so quickly crumbled into chaos. And so no doubt they were. But they obviously require themselves to be explained by causes more general and more remote; and what were these?

If I answer as I feel disposed to answer—Decadence—you will properly ask how the unknown becomes less unknown merely by receiving a name. I reply that if there be indeed subtle changes in the social tissues of old communities which make them, as time goes on, less resistant to the external attacks and the internal disturbances by which all communities are threatened, overt recognition of the fact is a step in advance. We have not an idea of what "life" consists in, but if on that account we were to abstain from using the term, we should not be better but worse equipped for dealing with the problems of physiology; while on the other hand, if we could translate life into terms of matter and motion to-morrow, we should still be obliged to use the word in order to distinguish the material movements which constitute life from those which do not. In like manner we are ignorant of the inner character of the cell changes which produce senescence. But should we be better fitted to form a correct conception of the life-history of complex organisms if we refused to recognise any cause of death but accident or disease? I admit, of course, that the term "decadence" is less precise than "old age," as sociology deals with organisms far less definite than biology. I admit also that it explains noth-

ing. If its use is to be justified at all, the justification must depend not on the fact that it supplies an explanation, but on the fact that it rules out explanations which are obvious but inadequate. And this may be a service of some importance. The facile generalisations with which we so often season the study of dry historic fact; the habits of political discussion which induce us to catalogue for purposes of debate the outward signs that distinguish (as we are prone to think) the standing from the falling state, hide the obscurer, but more potent, forces which silently prepare the fate of empires. National character is subtle and elusive; not to be expressed in statistics nor measured by the rough methods which suffice the practical moralist or statesman. And when through an ancient and still powerful state there spreads a mood of deep discouragement, when the reaction against recurring ills grows feebler, and the ship rises less buoyantly to each succeeding wave, when learning languishes, enterprise slackens, and vigour ebbs away, then, as I think, there is present some process of social degeneration which we must perforce recognise, and which, pending a satisfactory analysis, may conveniently be distinguished by the name of "decadence."

I am well aware that though the space I have just devoted to the illustration of my theme pro-

vided by Roman history is out of all proportion to the general plan of this address, yet the treatment of it is inadequate and perhaps unconvincing. But those who are most reluctant to admit that decay, as distinguished from misfortune, may lower the general level of civilisation, can hardly deny that in many cases that level may for indefinite periods show no tendency to rise. If decadence be unknown, is not progress exceptional? Consider the changing politics of the unchanging East.[1] Is it not true that there, while wars and revolutions, dynastic and religious, have shattered ancient states and brought new ones into being, every community, as soon as it has risen above the tribal and nomad condition, adopts with the rarest exceptions a form of government which, from its very generality in Eastern lands, we habitually call an "oriental despotism"? We may crystallise and re-crystallise a soluble salt as often as we please, the new crystals will always resemble the old ones. The crystals, indeed, may be of different sizes, their component molecules may occupy different positions within the crystalline structure, but the structure itself will be of one immutable

[1] The "East" is a term most loosely used. It does not here include China and Japan and *does* include part of Africa. The observations which follow have no reference either to the Jews or to the commercial aristocracies of Phœnician origin.

pattern. So it is, or seems to be, with these oriental states. They rise, in turn, upon the ruins of their predecessors, themselves predestined to perish by a like fate. But whatever their origin or history, they are always either autocracies or aggregations of autocracies; and no differences of race, of creed, or of language seem sufficient to vary the violent monotony of their internal history. In the eighteenth century theorists were content to attribute the political servitude of the Eastern world to the unscrupulous machinations of tyrants and their tools. And such explanations are good as far as they go. But this, in truth, is not very far. Intrigue, assassination, ruthless repression, the whole machinery of despotism supply particular explanations of particular incidents. They do not supply the general explanation of the general phenomenon. They tell you how this ruler or that obtained absolute power. They do not tell you why every ruler is absolute. Nor can I furnish the answer. The fact remains that over large and relatively civilised portions of the world popular government is profoundly unpopular, in the sense that it is no natural or spontaneous social growth. Political absolutism, not political freedom, is the familar weed of the country. Despots change but despotism remains; and if through alien influences, like those exercised by Greek cities in Asia, or by

British rule in India, the type is modified, it may well be doubted whether the modification could long survive the moment when its sustaining cause was withdrawn.

Now it would almost seem as if in lands where this political type was normal a certain level of culture (not of course the same in each case) could not permanently be overpassed. If under the excitement of religion or conquest, or else through causes more complicated and more obscure, this limit has sometimes been left behind, reaction has always followed, and decadence set in. Many persons indeed, as I have already observed, take this as a matter of course. It seems to them the most natural thing in the world that the glories of the Eastern Khalifate should decay, and that the Moors in Morocco should lose even the memory of the learning and the arts possessed but three centuries ago by the Moors in Spain. To me it seems mysterious. But whether it be easy of comprehension or difficult, does it not furnish food for disquieting reflection? If there are whole groups of nations capable on their own initiative of a certain measure of civilisation, but capable apparently of no more, and if below them again there are (as I suppose) other races who seem incapable of either creating a civilisation of their own, or of preserving unaided a civilisation impressed upon

them from without, by what right do we assume that no impossible limits bar the path of Western progress? Those limits may not yet be in sight. Surely they are not. But does not a survey of history suggest that somewhere in the dim future they await our approach?

It may be replied that the history of Rome on which I dwelt a moment ago, shows that arrested progress, and even decadence, may be but the prelude to a new period of vigorous growth. So that even those races or nations which seem frozen into eternal immobility may base upon experience their hopes of an awakening spring.

I am not sure, however, that this is the true interpretation of the facts. There is no spectacle indeed in all history more impressive than the thick darkness settling down over Western Europe, blotting out all but a faint and distorted vision of Græco-Roman culture, and then, as it slowly rises, unveiling the variety and rich promise of the modern world. But I do not think we should make this unique phenomenon support too weighty a load of theory. I should not infer from it that when some wave of civilisation has apparently spent its force, we have a right to regard its withdrawing sweep as but the prelude to a new advance. I should rather conjecture that in this particular case we should find, among other subtle causes of

decadence, some obscure disharmony between the Imperial system and the temperament of the West, undetected even by those who suffered from it. That system, though accepted with contentment and even with pride, though in the days of its greatness it brought civilisation, commerce, and security in its train, must surely have lacked some elements which are needed to foster among Teutons, Celts, and Iberians the qualities, whatever these may be, on which sustained progress depends. It was perhaps too oriental for the occident, and it certainly became more oriental as time went on. In the East it was, comparatively speaking, successful. If there was no progress, decadence was slow; and but for what Western Europe did, and what it failed to do, during the long struggle with militant Mahomedanism, there might still be an Empire in the East, largely Asiatic in population, Christian in religion, Greek in culture, Roman by political descent.

Had this been the course of events large portions of mankind would doubtless have been much better governed than they are. It is not so clear that they would have been more "progressive." Progress is with the West—with communities of the European type. And if *their* energy of development is some day to be exhausted, who can believe that there remains any external source

from which it can be renewed? Where are the untried races competent to construct out of the ruined fragments of our civilisation a new and better habitation for the spirit of man? They do not exist; and if the world is again to be buried under a barbaric flood, it will not be like that which fertilised, though it first destroyed, the western provinces of Rome, but like that which in Asia submerged for ever the last traces of Hellenic culture.

We are thus brought back to the question I put a few moments since: What grounds are there for supposing that we can escape the fate to which other races have had to submit? If for periods which, measured on the historic scale, are of great duration, communities which have advanced to a certain point appear able to advance no further; if civilisations wear out, and races become effete, why should we expect to progress indefinitely, why for us alone is the doom of man to be reversed?

To these questions I have no very satisfactory answers to give, nor do I believe that our knowledge of national or social psychology is sufficient to make a satisfactory answer possible. Some purely tentative observations on the point may, however, furnish a fitting conclusion to an address which has been tentative throughout, and aims

rather at suggesting trains of thought, than at completing them.

I assume that the factors which combine to make each generation what it is at the moment of its entrance into adult life are in the main two-fold. The one produces the raw material of society, the process of manufacture is effected by the other. The first is physiological or rather psycho-physical inheritance, the second is the inheritance partly of external conditions of life, partly of beliefs,[1] traditions, sentiments, customs, laws, and organisation—all that constitute the social surroundings in which men grow up to maturity.

I hazard no conjecture as to the share borne respectively by these two kinds of cause in producing their joint result. Nor are we likely to obtain satisfactory evidence on the subject till, in the interests of science, two communities of different blood and different traditions consent to exchange their children at birth by a universal process of reciprocal adoption. But even in the absence of so heroic an experiment, it seems safe to say that the mobility which makes possible either progress or decadence, resides rather in the causes grouped under the second head than in the psycho-physical material on which education, in the widest sense of that ambiguous term, has got to

[1] Beliefs include knowledge.

work. If, as I suppose, acquired qualities are not inherited, the only causes which could fundamentally modify the psycho-physical character of any particular community are its intermixture with alien races through slavery, conquest, or immigration; or else new conditions which varied the relative proportions in which different sections of the populations contributed to its total numbers. If, for example, the more successful members of the community had smaller families than the less successful; or if medical administration succeeded in extinguishing maladies to which persons of a particular constitution were specially liable; or if one strain in a mixed race had a larger birth-rate than another—in these cases and in others like them, there would doubtless be a change in the inherited factor of national character. But such changes are not likely, I suppose, to be considerable, except, perhaps, when they are due to the mixture of races —and that only in new countries whose economic opportunities tempt immigrants widely differing in capacity for culture from those whose citizenship they propose to share.

The flexible element in any society, that which is susceptible of progress or decadence, must therefore be looked for rather in the physical and psychical conditions affecting the life of its component units, than in their inherited constitution.

This last rather supplies a limit to variations than an element which does itself vary, though from this point of view its importance is capital. I at least find it quite impossible to believe that any attempt to provide widely different races with an identical environment—political, religious, educational, what you will—can ever make them alike. They have been different since history began; different they are destined to remain through future periods of comparable duration.

But though the advance of each community is thus limited by its inherited aptitudes, I do not suppose that those limits have ever been reached by its unaided efforts. In the cases where a forward movement has died away, the pause must in part be due to arrested development in the variable, not to a fixed resistance in the unchanging factor of national character. Either external conditions are unfavourable; or the sentiments, customs and beliefs which make society possible have hardened into shapes which make its further self-development impossible; or through mere weariness of spirit the community resigns itself to a contented, or perhaps a discontented, stagnation; or it shatters itself in pursuit of impossible ideals, or, for other and obscurer reasons, flags in its endeavours and falls short of possible achievement.

Now I am quite unable to offer any such general analysis of the causes by which these hindrances to progress are produced or removed as would furnish a reply to my question. But it may be worth noting that a social force has come into being, new in magnitude if not in kind, which must favourably modify such hindrances as come under all but the last of the divisions in which I have roughly arranged them. This force is the modern alliance between pure science and industry. That on this we must mainly rely for the improvement of the material conditions under which societies live is in my opinion obvious, although no one would conjecture it from a historic survey of political controversy. Its direct moral effects are less obvious; indeed there are many most excellent people who would altogether deny their existence. To regard it as a force fitted to rouse and sustain the energies of nations would seem to them absurd; for this would be to rank it with those other forces which have most deeply stirred the emotions of great communities, have urged them to the greatest exertions, have released them most effectually from the benumbing fetters of merely personal preoccupations—it would be to rank it with religion, patriotism, and politics. Industrial expansion under scientific inspiration, so far from deserving praise like this, is, in their view, at best but a

new source of material well-being, at worst the prolific parent of physical ugliness in many forms, machine-made wares, smoky cities, polluted rivers and desecrated landscapes—appropriately associated with materialism and greed.

I believe this view to be utterly misleading, confounding accident with essence, transient accompaniments with inseparable characteristics. Should we dream of thus judging the other great social forces of which I have spoken? Are we to ignore what religion has done for the world because it has been the fruitful excuse for the narrowest bigotries and the most cruel persecutions? Are we to underrate the worth of politics because politics may mean no more than the mindless clash of factions, or the barren exchange of one set of tyrants or jobbers for another? Is patriotism to be despised because its manifestations have been sometimes vulgar, sometimes selfish, sometimes brutal, sometimes criminal? Estimates like these seem to me worse than useless. All great social forces are not merely capable of perversion: they are constantly perverted. Yet were they eliminated from our social system, were each man (acting on the advice which Voltaire gave but never followed) to disinterest himself in everything beyond the limits of his own cabbage garden,

decadence, I take it, would have already far advanced.

But if the proposition I am defending may be wrongly criticised, it is still more likely to be wrongly praised. To some it will commend itself as a eulogy on an industrial as distinguished from a military civilisation; as a suggestion that in the peaceful pursuit of wealth is to be found a valuable social tonic. This may possibly be true, but it is not my contention. In talking of the alliance between industry and science my emphasis is at least as much on the word science as on the word industry. I am not concerned now with the proportion of the population devoted to productive labour, or the esteem in which they are held. It is on the effects which I believe are following, and are going in yet larger measure to follow, from the intimate relation between scientific discovery and industrial efficiency, that I most desire to insist.

Do you then, it will be asked, so highly rate the utilitarian aspect of research as to regard it as a source, not merely of material convenience, but of spiritual elevation? Is it seriously to be ranked with religion and patriotism as an important instrument for raising men's lives above what is small, personal, and self-centred? Does it not rather pervert pure knowledge into a new contrivance for

making money, and give little needed encouragement to the "growing materialism of the age"?

I do not myself believe that this age is either less spiritual or more sordid than its predecessors. I believe, indeed, precisely the reverse. But however this may be, is it not plain that if a society is to be moved by the remote speculations of isolated thinkers it can only be on condition that their isolation is not complete? Some point of contact they must have with the world in which they live; and if their influence is to be based on widespread sympathy, the contact must be in a region where there can be, if not full mutual comprehension, at least a large measure of practical agreement and willing co-operation. Philosophy has never touched the mass of men except through religion. And, though the parallel is not complete, it is safe to say that science will never touch them unaided by its practical applications. Its wonders may be catalogued for purposes of education, they may be illustrated by arresting experiments, by numbers and magnitudes which startle or fatigue the imagination; but they will form no familiar portion of the intellectual furniture of ordinary men unless they be connected, however remotely, with the conduct of ordinary life. Critics have made merry over the naïve self-importance which represented the human race as the centre and final

cause of the universe, and conceived the stupendous mechanism of Nature as primarily designed to satisfy its wants and minister to its entertainment. But there is another, and an opposite, danger into which it is possible to fall. The material world, howsoever it may have gained in sublimity, has, under the touch of science, lost (so to speak) in domestic charm. Its profounder secrets seem so remote from the concerns of men that in the majority they rouse no serious interest; while of the minority who are fascinated by its marvels, not a few will be chilled by its impersonal and indifferent immensity.

For this latter mood only religion or religious philosophy can supply a cure. But for the former, the appropriate remedy is the perpetual stimulus which the influence of science on the business of mankind offers to their sluggish curiosity. And even now I believe this influence to be underrated. If in the last hundred years the whole material setting of civilised life has altered, we owe it neither to politicians nor to political institutions. We owe it to the combined efforts of those who have advanced science and those who have applied it. If our outlook upon the Universe has suffered modifications in detail so great and so numerous that they amount collectively to a revolution, it is to men of science we owe it, not to theologians or

philosophers. On these, indeed, new and weighty responsibilities are being cast. They have to harmonise and to co-ordinate, to prevent the new from being narrow, to preserve unharmed the valuable essence of what is old. But science is the great instrument of social change, all the greater because its object is not change but knowledge; and its silent appropriation of this dominant function, amid the din of political and religious strife, is the most vital of all the revolutions which have marked the development of modern civilisation.

It may seem fanciful to find in a single recent aspect of this revolution an influence which resembles religion or patriotism in its appeals to the higher side of ordinary characters—especially since we are accustomed to regard the appropriation by industry of scientific discoveries merely as a means of multiplying the material conveniences of life. But if it be remembered that this process brings vast sections of every industrial community into admiring relation with the highest intellectual achievement and the most disinterested search for truth; that those who live by directly ministering to the common wants of average humanity lean for support on those who search among the deepest mysteries of Nature; that this dependence is rewarded by growing success; that success gives in its turn an incentive to individual effort in no wise

to be measured by personal expectation of gain; that the energies thus aroused may affect the whole character of the community, spreading the beneficent contagion of hope and high endeavour through channels scarcely known, to workers [1] in fields the most remote; if all this be borne in mind the relation of science and industry may perhaps seem not unworthy of the place among moral antiseptics which I have tentatively assigned to it.

But I do not offer this speculation, whatever be its worth, as an answer to my original question. It is but an aid to optimism, not a reply to pessimism. Such a reply can only be given by a sociology which has arrived at trustworthy conclusions on the life-history of different types of society, and has risen above the empirical and merely interrogative point of view which, for want of a better, I have adopted in this address. No such sociology exists at present, or seems likely soon to be created. In its absence the conclusions at which I provisionally arrive are that we cannot regard decadence and arrested development as less normal in human communities than progress: that the internal causes by which, in any given community, progress is encouraged, hindered, or reversed, lie to a great extent beyond the field of ordinary political vision, and are not easily ex-

[1] See note at the end of the paper.

pressed in current political terminology; that the influence which a superior civilisation, acting from without, may have in advancing an inferior one, though often beneficent, is not likely to be permanent or (so to speak) self-supporting, unless the character of the civilisation be in harmony both with the acquired temperament and with the innate capacities of those who have been induced to accept it; that as regards those nations which still advance in virtue of their own inherent energies, though time has brought perhaps new causes of disquiet, it has brought also new grounds of hope; and that whatever be the perils in front of us, there are, so far, no symptoms either of pause or of regression in the onward movement which for more than a thousand years has been characteristic of Western civilisation.

Note to Page 48

This remark arises out of a train of thought suggested by two questions which are very pertinent to the subject of the Address.

(1) Is a due succession of men above the average in original capacity necessary to maintain social progress? and

(2) If so, can we discover any law according to which such men are produced?

I entertain no doubt myself that the answer to the first question should be in the affirmative. Democracy is an excellent thing; but, though quite consistent with prog-

ress, it is not progressive *per se.* Its value is regulative not dynamic; and if it meant (as it never does) substantial uniformity instead of legal equality, we should become fossilised at once. Movement may be controlled or checked by the many; it is initiated and made effective by the few. If (for the sake of illustration) we suppose mental capacity in all its many forms to be mensurable and commensurable, and then imagine two societies possessing the same average capacity—but an average made up in one case of equal units, in the other of a majority slightly below the average and a minority much above it—few could doubt that the second, not the first, would show the greatest aptitude for movement. It might go wrong, but it would go.

The second question—how is this originality (in its higher manifestations called genius) effectively produced? —is not so simple.

Excluding education in its narrowest sense—which few would regard as having much to do with the matter—the only alternatives seem to be the following:

Original capacity may be no more than one of the ordinary variations incidental to heredity. A community may breed a minority thus exceptionally gifted, as it breeds a minority of men over six feet six. There may be an average decennial output of congenital geniuses as there is an average decennial output of congenital idiots —though the number is likely to be smaller.

But if this be the sole cause of the phenomenon, why does the same race *apparently* produce many men of genius in one generation and few in another? Why are years of abundance so often followed by long periods of sterility?

The most obvious explanation of this would seem to be that in some periods circumstances give many openings to genius, in some periods few. The genius is constantly produced; but it is only occasionally recognised.

In this there must be some truth. A mob orator in Turkey, a religious reformer in seventeenth-century Spain, a military genius in the Sandwich islands, would hardly get their chance. Yet the theory of opportunity can scarcely be reckoned a complete explanation, for it leaves unaccounted for the *variety* of ability which has in some countries marked epochs of vigorous national development. Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries, Florence in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries, Holland in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are typical examples. In such periods the opportunities of statesmen, soldiers, orators, and diplomatists, may have been specially frequent. But whence came the poets, the sculptors, the painters, the philosophers and the men of letters? What peculiar opportunities had *they?*

The only explanation, if we reject the idea of a mere coincidence, seems to be that, quite apart from opportunity, the exceptional stir and fervour of national life evokes or may evoke qualities which in ordinary times lie dormant, unknown even to their possessors. The potential Miltons are "mute" and "inglorious," not because they cannot find a publisher, but because they have nothing they want to publish. They lack the kind of inspiration which, on this view, flows from social surroundings where great things, though of quite another kind, are being done and thought.

If this theory be true (and it is not without its diffi-

culties), one would like to know whether these undoubted outbursts of originality in the higher and rarer form of genius are symptomatic of a general rise in the number of persons exhibiting original capacity of a more ordinary type. If so, then the conclusion would seem to be that some kind of widespread exhilaration or excitement is required in order to enable any community to extract the best results from the raw material transmitted to it by natural inheritance.

Note II (1920)

Long subsequent to the writing of this Lecture I was given, through the courtesy of Professor Simkhovitch of Columbia University, an opportunity of reading some results of his investigations into the gradual degradation in the productiveness of Mediterranean lands during the later Roman Republic and the Empire. I am not qualified to form any independent judgment on the value of his conclusions. But his argument has deeply impressed me; and I am convinced that historians should give more attention than they have commonly cared to bestow upon the social and political effects of soil deterioration in ancient and mediæval times. It may well be that this purely physical cause had a greater share than we have been accustomed to suppose in producing what I have always deemed the most mysterious movement in history —the slow "decline and fall" of the Roman Empire.

Note III (1920)

The reader of this lecture may perhaps think that I am oblivious of all the ambiguities and obscurities

which beset such words as "Progress" and "Decadence." This is not so. It must however suffice, in the present state of our knowledge, that the terms convey, though loosely, more or less intelligible conceptions. Discussion may gradually make them more precise: I have taken them as I found them.

PART ONE: SPECULATIVE

II: BEAUTY—AND THE CRITICISM OF BEAUTY

II

BEAUTY: AND THE CRITICISM OF BEAUTY[1]

I

THE theme of this paper is beauty and the criticism of beauty; æsthetic excellence and its analysis. From prehistoric times men have occupied themselves in producing works of art: since the time of Aristotle they have spent learned energy in commenting on them. How much are we the wiser? What real insight do the commentaries give us into the qualities which produce æsthetic pleasure, or into the marks which distinguish good art from bad?

Any man desirous of obtaining answers to questions like these would naturally turn in the first place to the history of criticism, and if he did so he would certainly be well rewarded. It may be doubted, however, whether the reward would consist in the satisfaction of his curiosity. For in proportion as criticism has endeavoured to establish

[1] Romanes Lecture, Oxford University, November 24, 1909.

principles of composition, to lay down laws of Beauty, to fix criterions of excellence, so it seems to me to have failed; its triumphs, and they are great, have been won on a different field. The critics who have dealt most successfully with theory have dealt with it destructively. They have demolished the dogmas of their predecessors, but have advanced few dogmas of their own. So that, after some twenty-three centuries of æsthetic speculation, we are still without any accepted body of æsthetic doctrine.

Perhaps the most perverse of all forms of critical theory is that which flourished so luxuriantly immediately after the revival of learning. It professed to base itself on experience. Accepting the classical masterpieces as supreme models of excellence, it asked how they were made. To examine minutely the procedure of the great classical writers, to embody their example in rules, to standardise their practice, seemed the obvious method of enabling the moderns to acquire some tincture of the literary merits so ardently admired in the ancients: and the method was applied with a simple-minded consistency which to the reader of the twentieth century seems both pathetic and ludicrous. "If you would rival antiquity," said the critics, "imitate it. If you would imitate it, note well its methods. When these have been thor-

oughly mastered, it should be as easy to frame recipes for writing an epic, as for compounding a plum-pudding"—and they framed them accordingly.[1]

It soon became evident, of course, that such a procedure was futile. The idea that the essential excellence of great literature could be extracted by this process of learned analysis was too crude to last. Yet rules of composition, supposed to be of classical authority, did not therefore at once fall into disrepute. A writer might, to be sure, ignore them; but he did so at his peril. If he failed, his failure was unredeemed. He could not even claim to be "correct." If his talents compelled success, he was classed as an "irregular genius," to be reluctantly allowed a licence forbidden to ordinary mankind.

In the criticism of Music and Painting similar tendencies have shown themselves from time to time; and if antiquity had left us masterpieces in these arts, and if Aristotle had effectively commented on them, the failure of post-renaissance criticism might have been as prominent in these departments of æsthetics as it has been in literature. As it is, the failure is the same in kind. The study of ancient sculpture gave rise in the

[1] All the subject is admirably discussed in Professor Saintsbury's great *History of Criticism.*

eighteenth century to some very famous generalisations. But they were based on an imperfect knowledge of Greek art, and (I imagine) have long lost the authority they once possessed. The criticism of music and painting shows the same weaknesses as the criticism of literature. Theory has lagged behind practice; and the procedure of the dead has too often been embodied in rules which serve no other purpose than to embarrass the living.

Criticism, however, of this kind has had its day. It is no longer in demand. The attempt to limit æsthetic expression by rules is seen to be futile. The attempt to find formulæ for the creation of new works of beauty by taking old works of beauty to pieces and noting how they were made, is seen to be more futile still. But if these kinds of criticism are obsolete, what is the criticism which now occupies their place?

It is abundant and, I think, admirable. The modern commentator is concerned rather to point out beauties than to theorise about them. He does not measure merit by rule, nor crowd his pages with judgments based on precedent. His procedure is very different. He takes his reader as if it were by the hand, wanders with him through some chosen field of literature or art, guides him to its fairest scenes, dwells on what he deems to

be its beauties, indicates its defects, and invites him to share his pleasures. His commentary on art is often itself a work of art; he deals with literature in what is in itself literature. And he so uses the apparatus of learned research that the least sympathetic reader, though he need not admire, can scarcely fail to understand the author criticised, the ends he aimed at, the models that swayed him, the conventions within which he worked, the nature of the successes which it was his fortune to achieve.

Of criticism like this we cannot have too much. Yet it has its difficulties; or rather it suggests difficulties which it scarcely attempts to solve. For its æsthetic judgments are, in spite of appearances, for the most part immediate and, so to speak, intuitive. "Lo, here!" "Lo, there!" "This is good!" "That is less good!" "What subtle charm in this stanza!" "What masterly orchestration in that symphony!" "What admirable realism!" "What delicate fancy!" The critic tells you what he likes or dislikes; he may even seem to tell you why; but the "why" is rarely more than a statement of personal preferences. For these preferences he may quote authority. He may classify them. He may frame general propositions about them which have all the air of embodying critical principles on which articular

æsthetic judgments may securely rest. But, in fact, these general propositions only summarise a multitude of separate valuations of æsthetic merit, each of which is either self-sustaining, or is worthless.

Many critics, it is true, would be slow to admit this. They are not content with historical and descriptive accounts of art and artists. They long for immutable principles of judgment based on the essential nature of beauty. It does not suffice them to rejoice over what, in their eyes at least, is beautiful; nor yet to make others rejoice with them. Unless they can appeal to some critical canon, abstract and universal, their personal estimates of æsthetic value seem of small account. Nor is it enough for them that they should be right. To complete their satisfaction, those who differ from them must be wrong.

This is perfectly natural. No one willingly believes that what he greatly admires is admirable only for him. We all instinctively lean to the opinion that beauty has "objective" worth, and that its expression, whether in nature or in art, possesses, as of right, significance for the world at large. Yet how is this possible? It is not merely that no code of critical legislation seems to be forthcoming. The difficulty lies deeper. If we had such a code, what authority could it claim? To

what objective test can judgment about beauty be made amenable? If a picture or a poem stirs my admiration, can there be any meaning in the statements that my taste is bad, and that if I felt rightly I should feel differently? If there be a meaning, what is it?

In dealing with this fundamental question we must, I think, distinguish. There *are* kinds of æsthetic excellence to which, in a certain sense, we can apply an "objective" test; though they are neither the highest kinds of excellence nor the most important from the point of view of theory. I might cite as examples technical skill, workmanship, the mastery over material and instruments, and kindred matters. These are more or less capable of impersonal measurement; and I cannot doubt either that the pleasure they give to the sympathetic observer is very great, or that it belongs to the same genus, if not the same species, as æsthetic feeling in its more familiar and higher meaning.

Some may think it dishonouring to beauty thus to class it with technical skill. Others, forgetful that Fine Art is the distant cousin of sport, may think it dishonouring to the technical skill required of the poet, the painter, or the musician, to compare it with that required of the cricketer or the billiard-player. There is no doubt an all-important

difference between them. In the case of games, the pleasures which the sympathetic observation of great skill produces in a competent spectator are unaffected by the result; for, beyond itself, true sport has, properly speaking, no result. Victory and defeat are subordinate incidents. The final cause of games is the playing of them. In art, on the other hand, skill is a means to an end; and if the end be not attained there is apt to arise a certain feeling of dissatisfaction. Dexterous versification which does not result in poetry, admirable brush-work expressing a mean design, may in their degree give pleasure; but it is pleasure marred by the reflection that the purpose for which versification and painting exist has not, in these cases, been accomplished.

However this may be, my contention is that the pleasure given by the contemplation of technical dexterity is æsthetic, and that technical dexterity itself is capable of objective estimation. In games of pure skill it is certainly so. He plays best who wins. The scorer is an infallible critic; and his standard of excellence is as "objective" as any man could desire. In other cases, no doubt, the measure of technical merit may not be so precise. It may be hard, for example, to decide which member of a hunt rides best across country, or which composer shows the greatest mastery of counterpoint

and fugue. Yet these also are questions more or less capable of "objective" estimation. The trained critic, be it in the art of riding or in contrapuntal conventions, may, by the application of purely impersonal tests, make a tolerably fair comparison. Familiar with the difficulties which have to be met, he can judge of the success with which they have been surmounted. Basing his estimate, not on feeling but on knowledge, he can measure æsthetic qualities by a scale which is not the less "objective" because it may often be uncertain in its application.

Here, then, are æsthetic qualities (I have taken artistic workmanship as an example) which have a known reality apart from æsthetic feeling, and which can be independently measured. Of these it is possible, in a certain loose sense, to say that the man who admires them is right, and the man who does not admire them is wrong: that the one sees excellence when it is there, while the other does not. But when we pass from qualities like these, through doubtful and marginal cases, to the qualities we call "sublime," "beautiful," "pathetic," "humorous," "melodious," and so forth, our position is quite different. What kind of existence are they known to possess apart from feeling? How are they to be measured except by the emotions they produce? Are they indeed anything but those

very emotions illegitimately "objectified," and assumed to be permanent attributes of the works of art which happen in this case or in that to excite them?

Questions of this kind have, I suppose, haunted all those who cannot accept canons of criticism based on precedent or authority. And many are the devices adopted, or hinted at, by which the sceptical individualism, which these doubts suggest, may be removed or mitigated.

Of such devices the most familiar is the assumption that, however impossible it may be to discover in what beauty consists, it is quite unnecessary to do so, since there is a common agreement as to the things which are in fact beautiful. Though the naturalist may not be able to define life, yet the world is not embarrassed to distinguish the living from the dead. Though there are many colour-blind people among us, yet the world judges with practical security that the flowers of a geranium are red and its leaves green. In like manner (it is thought) the world recognises beauty when it sees it, unmoved either by the dissent of negligible minorities, or by the imperfections of æsthetic theory.

These analogies, however, are misleading. Biologists may be perplexed about the mystery of life, but they can always tell you why they regard

this body as living and that one as dead. Their canons of judgment have "objective" value, and are as applicable to new cases as to old. The æsthetic critics of whom I am speaking make no such claim. They do not pretend to catalogue the external attributes by which the objective presence of the higher kinds of beauty can be securely established, which are never present when it is absent, or absent when it is present. They are always reduced in the last resort to ask, "Does this work of art convey æsthetic pleasure?"—a test which, on the face of it, is subjective, not objective.

So also with regard to colour. There are, of course, persons of abnormal vision to whom the flower of a geranium appears to possess very much the same hue as its leaves. But this throws no doubt on what ordinary men mean either by the sensation of red, or by a red object. The physical quality which constitutes redness is perfectly well known, and when its presence in some external body is otherwise established, it may be confidently foretold that in appropriate conditions it will produce the sensation of red in persons normally constituted. But subject to what has been said above, we know nothing of the objective side of beauty. When we say that a tune is melodious, or an image sublime, or a scene pathetic, the adjectives may seem to be predicated of these objects, in precisely

the same way as redness is predicated of a geranium. But it is not so. As I have already observed, we are merely naming the sentiments they produce, not the qualities by which they produce them. We cannot describe the higher beauties of beautiful objects except in terms of æsthetic feeling —and *ex vi termini* such descriptions are subjective.

It may, however, be admitted that if there were a general agreement about things that are beautiful, only philosophers would disquiet themselves in order to discover in what precisely their beauty consisted. But notoriously there is no such agreement. Difference of race, difference of age, different degrees of culture among men of the same race and the same age, individual idiosyncrasy and collective fashion occasion, or accompany, the widest possible divergence of æsthetic feeling. The same work of art which moves one man to admiration, moves another to disgust; what rouses the enthusiasm of one generation, leaves another hostile or indifferent.

These things are undeniable, and are not denied. But it is sometimes sought to soften the "individualist" conclusions to which they lead, by appealing from the wild and wandering fancies of ordinary men to an aristocracy of taste; and it must in fairness be acknowledged that among experts there is something distantly approaching a common body

of doctrine about the literary and artistic masterpieces of the world. Set a dozen contemporary critics to make lists of the best books, pictures, buildings, operas, and the results will be fairly harmonious. These results (it is claimed) may be regarded as evidence that among qualified judges there is an agreement sufficient to serve as a working substitute for some undiscovered, and perhaps undiscoverable, criterion of artistic merit.

But the more we examine the character of this agreement among experts the less weight shall we feel disposed to attach to it—and for more than one reason. In the first place, it must be remembered that the very fact of its existence has caused the cultivated portion of mankind—all who take even the most superficial interest in literature and art—to fall under the influence of a common literary and artistic tradition. This has many consequences. It inclines some persons to assume an admiration which they do not feel for things which everybody round them thinks worthy to be admired. Others again keep silence when they cannot praise. Nothing, they think, is gained by emphasising dissent. Why proclaim from the housetops that some author, long since dead, does not, in their opinion, deserve the share of fame assigned to him by accepted tradition? Let him rest. A more important effect is that the unfelt

pressure of general opinion produces not merely sham professions, but genuine sentiments. Fashion, whether in clothes or operas, whether in manners or in morals (as I have shown elsewhere) is an influence which, though it may produce some hypocrites, most certainly produces many true believers. And tradition, though infinitely more than mere fashion, is fashion still.

These considerations require us largely to discount the agreement prevalent in current estimates of literature and art. But there is a more important point still to be noted, which yet further diminishes the value of any conclusions which that agreement may seem to support. For we are bound to ask how deep the agreement goes even in the cases where in some measure it may be truly said to exist. Do critics who would approximately agree in their lists of great artists agree as to the order of their excellence? Do men of "trained sensibility" feel alike in the presence of the same masterpiece? I do not believe it. The mood of admiration aroused by style, by technical skill, by the command of material and instruments, may well form a common ground where competent critics will find themselves in decent agreement. But as the quality of æsthetic emotion rises, as we approach the level where the sentiment of beauty becomes intense, and the passion of admiration incommunicable, there is

not—and, I believe, cannot be—any real unanimity of personal valuation. On these high peaks men never wander in crowds; they whose paths lie close together on the slopes below perforce divide into diminishing companies, as each moves upwards towards his chosen ideals of excellence.

If any man doubt that the agreement among experts is in some degree artificial, and in some degree imaginary, let him turn for a moment from the critics who have created our literary and artistic tradition to the men of genius who have created literature and art. No one will deny that they were men of "trained sensibility": no one will maintain that they were agreed. So little, indeed, have they been agreed, that the law of change prevailing through certain important periods of artistic history seems to be based on their disagreement. Successive epochs, which show little difference in other elements of culture, yet often differ vehemently in their æsthetic judgments. Action is followed by reaction. A school, at one moment dominant, gradually decays, and is succeeded by another of sharply contrasted characteristics. The art-producing fields get wearied, as it were, of a crop too often sown; their harvests dwindle; until in the fullness of time a new vegetation, drawing upon fresh sources of nourishment, springs suddenly into vigorous and aggressive life.

Now, in looking back, either on revolutions like these, or on other less abrupt but equally important changes, of which the history of literature and art shows so many examples, we must not, for the purposes of the present argument, take up the position of the eclectic critic who, calmly appreciative and coldly just, sees merits in every school and is impassioned over none. All that my argument requires is proof that the judgments of great writers and artists, especially when they are untamed by the orthodoxies of traditions, show none of that agreement of which we are in search. Wordsworth on the eighteenth century, Boileau on the sixteenth, Voltaire on Shakespeare, the French romantics on the French classics, the Renaissance on the Middle Ages, are familiar illustrations of the point. And if further evidence be required, note how rarely eminent critics endeavour to lead opinion upon new artistic developments, and how rarely, when they do, they succeed in anticipating the verdict of posterity—so hesitating is their tread, so uncertain their course, when they have no tried tradition whereon to lean.

The same sharp division of taste among those who practise an art, somewhat smoothed over and blurred by those who subsequently comment on it, is illustrated (it seems to me) by the history of Gothic architecture. All know well the spectacle

of some great cathedral slowly grown to completion through the labours of successive generations. We neither find, nor expect to find, that the original design has been followed throughout. On the contrary, each succeeding school has built its share of work in its own style. The fourteenth-century architect does nothing as it would have been done could the twelfth-century architect have had his way; and the fifteenth century treats the fourteenth as the fourteenth treated its predecessors. We praise the mixed result, and doubtless we do well. But we make, I believe, a great mistake if we attribute to the mediæval artists our own mood of universal, if somewhat ineffectual, admiration. Their point of view was, probably, very different. If they refused to build in the old manner, it was because they thought the new manner better. They thought well of themselves and poorly of their forefathers. They had the intolerance which so often accompanies real creative power. This at least is my conjecture. What is not a matter of conjecture but of certainty is the way in which the different schools of mediæval architecture were collectively condemned by their successors. The barbaric extravagance of Gothic design was a common-place of criticism until the Gothic revival substituted tasteless imitation for ignorant contempt.

Music, however, is the art which perhaps most

clearly shows how futile is the search for agreement among men of "trained sensibility." It is indeed an art which, I may parenthetically observe, has many pecuniary merits as a subject of æsthetic study. It makes no assertions; so its claims on our admiration can have nothing to do with the "True." It serves no purpose; so it raises no question as to the relation between "the beautiful" and "the useful." It copies nothing; so the æsthetic worth of imitation and the proper relation of art to nature are problems which it never even suggests. From the endless controversies about Realism, Idealism, and Impressionism, with which the criticism of other arts have been encumbered, musical criticism is thus happily free; while the immense changes which have revolutionised both the artistic methods and the material resources of the musician —changes without a parallel either in literature, in painting, in sculpture, or even in architecture— have hindered the growth of an orthodox tradition. Music thus occupies in some respects a place apart; but its theoretic importance cannot on that account be ignored. On the contrary, it becomes all the more imperative to remember that no æsthetic principle which fails to apply to it can be other than partial and provincial. It can never claim to be a law governing the whole empire of artistic beauty.

That collisions of expert taste abound in the history of music will be generally admitted. But leaving on one side minor oscillations of opinion, let us take, as an illustration of our point, the contrast between the beginning and end of the period during which music has played a known part in European culture.

The contrast is certainly most striking. Our knowledge of ancient music is unsatisfactory: but it seems to be admitted that among the Greeks harmony, in the modern sense, was scarcely used, and that their instrumentation was as rudimentary as their harmony. Of their compositions we know little. But it is plain that, however exquisite may have been the airs rendered by means so modest as these, their charms to modern ears would be thin and colourless compared with those that modern music itself is able to convey—not because the Greek genius was inferior, but because it had not the means, in this particular art, of giving itself full expression. Titian limited to a lead pencil.

Now this observation, taken by itself, is not, of course, relevant to my present argument. It becomes significant only when we compare it with the view the Greeks themselves took of their own music. To us it seems that this was the one branch of artistic production in which they did not attain a

certain mature perfection.[1] Even if we assume that they did all that could be done with the means at their disposal, we must still suppose that the poverty of those means most fatally limited their powers of artistic creation. But this does not seem to have been their own opinion. On the contrary, while the architect was counted as little better than a skilled artisan, the musician ranked with the poet. Music itself they put high among the arts. They devoted endless labour to its theory, and their accounts of its emotional effect would seem exaggerated in the mouths of those familiar with the most impassioned strains of modern composers, aided by all the resources of a modern orchestra. That any tunes, rendered in unison by voice or lyre or pipe, or all three together, should be thought by grave philosophers so moving as to be a danger to society appears incredible. It seems, nevertheless, to have been the fact.

If so, it is a fact which irresistibly suggests that the most artistic race the world has seen rated æsthetic values on a scale quite different from our own. Of their literature and their architecture we know much; of their sculpture we know something. Of their music it may be thought that we know nothing. But we know both the ardour with which

[1] To be sure we know nothing worth knowing of their painting.

it was cultivated, the esteem in which it was held, and its narrow limitations. And this knowledge is sufficient to prove my thesis. No one can seriously suppose that if he were suddenly transported to the Athens of Phidias and Sophocles, he would count the Greek musician as worthy of a place beside the Greek sculptor and the Greek poet!

I will not further multiply proofs of the deep differences by which trained taste is divided. I doubt whether, on reflection, anyone will seriously question the fact, whatever he may think of the particular illustrations by which I have endeavoured to establish it. A more fundamental question, however, remains behind: What title has the opinion of experts to authority in matters æsthetic? Even if it showed that agreement in which it is so conspicuously lacking, why should men endeavour to mould their feelings into the patterns it prescribes? In the practical affairs of life we follow those who have made a special study of some particular problem, only because they have greater knowledge than ourselves of the relevant facts. But in the region of Æsthetics, what are the relevant facts? If the worth of beauty lie in the emotion which it occasions, special knowledge can only be of importance when it heightens that emotion. It may be a stimulus, but how can it be a guide?

Now, as I have already pointed out, there are

many cases where special knowledge does serve to heighten emotion; indeed, there are cases where, without that knowledge, no emotion would be felt at all. The pleasure consciously derived from masterly workmanship is one case in point. Another is, where a work of art seems nearly unmeaning, considered out of its historical setting, and yet shines with significant beauty when that setting has been provided for us by the labours of the critic.

But is there not another side to this question? Does not the direct appeal made to uncultivated receptivity by what critics would describe as very indifferent art sometimes produce æsthetic emotion which, measured by its intensity, might be envied by the most delicate connoisseur? Who shall deny that the schoolboy, absorbed in some tale of impossible adventure, incurious about its author, indifferent to its style, interested only in the breathless succession of heroic endeavours and perilous escapes, is happy in the enjoyment of what is art, and nothing but art? If to those of riper years and different tastes the art seems poor, does that make it poor? Does such a judgment condemn either writer or reader? Surely not. The writer, to be sure, may be something less than Homer; but the spirit of the reader—simple, credulous, enjoying—is the spirit in which, of old, before criticism was born, some Greek king and his high-born guests

listened to the tale of Troy and the wanderings of Ulysses.

I do not, of course, either say or think that the pleasures of art diminish as the knowledge of art augments. Some loss there commonly is, as men grow old and learned; yet we may hope that in most cases it is compensated a hundred-fold. But it is not always so. In popular usage the very word "criticism" suggests the detection of faults and the ignoring of merits; in popular esteem the refusal to admire marks the man of taste. This singular view, which suggests the inference that artistic education is an instrument for making men fastidious and preventing them being happy, derives, it may be, some faint support from facts. Are there not persons to be found who have sharpened the delicacy of their æsthetic discrimination to the finest edge, yet take but small pleasure in beauty—who are the oracles of artistic societies, the terror (or perhaps the Providence) of rich collectors, whom no copy can deceive, nor any original delight? Surely the worst taste in the world is better than taste so good as this!

Such temperaments are rare. But even their possibility suggests a problem which seems to me most difficult of solution. If there be no objective standard of merit, and the degree of æsthetic emotion which a work of art produces be the only

measure of its excellence, how are the elements which make up that emotion to be compared? What (more particularly) is to be allowed for quality, what for quantity?—vague terms, though sufficiently intelligible for my purpose.

Consider, for example, this case. There have been in Literature—indeed, I think in all the arts—men of delicate or peculiar genius, whose works make little appeal to the crowd, yet find at intervals through many generations a few devoted lovers. Their names may have an established place in history, and their writings be read for purposes of study or examination. But the number of those who really feel their charm is small. Count them, and they would not in a century equal the audiences which in six months are moved to tears or laughter by some popular play. Which, then, of these two, contributes most to the æsthetic pleasures of the world—the play which, in its brief moment of favour, gives widespread delight, or the poem (if poem it be) which is long remembered but little read?

No one would give his verdict for the play. Yet why not? It is, I suppose, because we rate the delicate pleasure given by the poem as higher in "quality," though it be smaller in "quantity" than the commoner joys supplied wholesale by its rival. And this may be perfectly right. Beyond doubt,

there are real distinctions, corresponding to such words as "higher" and "lower," "refined" and "commonplace"; beyond doubt, we cannot regard æsthetic emotion as a homogeneous entity, undifferentiated in quality, simply to be measured as "more" or "less." This makes it hard enough for a man to determine a scale of values which shall honestly represent his own æsthetic experience. But does it not make it absolutely hopeless to find a scale which shall represent, even in the roughest approximation, the experiences of mankind? The task is inherently impossible; and it is made doubly impossible by the difficulty we all find in excluding irrelevant considerations. The thing to be discovered being what men *do* feel, we are always considering what, if their taste was good, they *ought* to feel; what, if they were properly trained, they *would* feel; what it is best for their spiritual well-being that they *should* feel, and so forth. None of which questions, important and interesting as they are, assist us to discover or to apply a scale of values based merely on the æsthetic emotions actually experienced.

II

The conclusions so far reached are in the main negative. We have had to reject the idea that a standard of excellence can either be extracted by

critical analysis from the practice of accepted models, or that it can be based on the consensus of experts, or upon universal suffrage. We must recognise that, while training is necessary to the comprehension, and therefore to the full enjoyment, of many works of art—while, in particular, the sympathetic delight in masterly workmanship can hardly be obtained without it—few æsthetic emotions exceed in intensity the simple raptures aroused in naïve souls by works which instructed criticism would often refuse to admire. And we must own that if, defeated in the attempt to base our judgments on authority, we endeavour to base them on general experience; if we say that *that* is the greatest æsthetic performance which gives to mankind the greatest æsthetic delight—we are brought face to face with countless difficulties; among which not the least is the difficulty of saying what *is* the greatest æsthetic delight, when the greatness which has to be measured is a value dependent on the "quality" of the delight, as well as on its "quantity."

Now to those who approach æsthetics from the side of psychology, all these conclusions seem natural enough. For it is only among the simple organic pleasures—the pleasures of sense—that, as between man and man, approximate uniformity of pleasurable experience might be antecedently ex-

pected. All persons who can taste at all are agreed as to what is sweet and what is bitter; and all children, at least, are agreed that the first is nice and the second is nasty. Maturer palates no doubt may be variously affected by the finer aspects of the culinary art; but though differences of custom between communities, and differences of sense-perception between individuals, mar the original uniformity of judgment, yet on the whole the civilised world is fairly agreed as to what it likes to eat and drink. But in the region of æsthetics conditions are very different. *There* association of ideas plays so important a part in the creation of taste, the feeling of beauty springs from psychological causes so complex and so subtle, that we need feel no surprise at its being occasioned in different people by different objects. In the pleasures of sense we never get very far from the innate physiological qualities in which men are most alike. In the pleasures of æsthetics we are very largely concerned with the qualities in which men most vary—education, experience, beliefs, traditions, customs. The strange thing is not that there should be so little agreement in critical judgments as that there should be so much: though, to be sure, the agreement is, as I have already pointed out, often more apparent than real. This, however, is no consolation to those who cannot willingly part with the be-

lief that in art there is a "right" and a "wrong," as well as a "more pleasing" and a "less pleasing." A theory which makes every man a law unto himself, which shatters anything in the nature of an independent standard, which barely admits the theoretic possibility of arriving at some rough estimate of the æsthetic values actually realised in experience, is to them well-nigh intolerable. It seems to make our highest ideals the sport of individual caprice, to reduce the essence of beauty to individual feeling, and in so doing to make it no more than the transitory consequence of chance susceptibilities, or the incalculable by-product of social evolution.

The reluctance to accept such views has (often unconsciously) driven some critical theorists to strange expedients. If the dignity of art be lowered by the instability of æsthetic values, it might, they think, be raised by an alliance with other great spiritual interests. An artist is therefore deemed to be more than the maker of beautiful things. He is a seer, a moralist, a prophet. He must intuitively penetrate the realities which lie behind this world of shows. At the lowest he must supply "a criticism of life." In much of Ruskin's work æsthetics, theology, and morals are inextricably intertwined. In the criticisms by smaller men, the same thing has been done in a smaller way; and

obiter dicta based on the view that good art is always something more than art, that it not only creates beauty, but symbolically teaches philosophy, religion, ethics, even science, are constantly to be found in the purple passages of enthusiastic commentators on poetry, music, and painting.

For myself I admit that I require a mystical supplement to that strictly critical view of beauty and art with which alone I am now concerned. But nothing is gained by pretending that we have reached the point where the two can be blended in one harmonious system. So far as I can see we are not near it. In particular I can find no justification in experience for associating great art with penetrating insight, or good art with good morals. Optimism and pessimism; materialism and spiritualism; theism, pantheism, atheism; morality and immorality; religion and irreligion; lofty resignation and passionate revolt—each and all have inspired or helped to inspire the creators of artistic beauty. It would even (I suppose) be rash confidently to assert that the "everlasting Yea" provides material more easily moulded to the uses of high imagination than the "everlasting Nay"; while it is certain that cheap cynicism and petty spite have supplied the substance of literary achievements which we could ill afford to lose.

To a very different order of thought belong the

vast metaphysical structures of German philosophers. Yet they also have been greatly concerned to find for æsthetics a fitting niche in the eternal framework of the transcendental "whole." No one will suggest that their efforts have been half-hearted, or that their task has been undertaken in other than the most serious spirit. But it would plainly be impossible properly to discuss beauty and metaphysics in a lecture devoted to beauty and criticism. It is perhaps the less necessary to make the attempt since I do not remember that in this country, with the exception of Professor Bosanquet, metaphysicians, even those most in sympathy with the general attitude of the great transcendentalists, have dwelt at length upon their æsthetic speculations. However this may be, I cannot, for my own part, find that these have provided me with any way of escape from the difficulties which I most acutely feel. I get no aid from such doctrine as that "æsthetics is the meeting-point of reason and understanding," or that "it is the sensible expression of the idea," or that "it is the expression of the unconscious will." In truth these views labour under the disadvantage that, while they are almost meaningless to those who cannot accept the systems of which they are a fragment, they are not, I think (though I speak with diffidence), enthusiastically adopted even by those

to whose general way of thinking those systems are congenial.

The result, then, of this concise survey of a great subject is negative. Apart from transcendental metaphysics, I have said enough (in my belief at least) to show that neither considered in themselves, nor in their relation to any wider outlook, can our valuations of beauty claim "objective" validity. We can say of a work of art or a scene in nature—"this moves me"; we may partially distinguish the elements which produce the total result and attempt some estimate of their worth separately as well as in combination; we may compare æsthetic merit in respect of quality as well as quantity, saying, for example, of one thing—"this is great" [1]; of another—"this is exquisite," of a third —"this is merely pretty," and so on. But beyond statements embodying personal valuations like these we can rarely go. We cannot devise a code of criticism. We cannot define the dogmas of æsthetic orthodoxy. We can appeal neither to reason, nor experience, nor authority. Ideals of beauty change from generation to generation. Those who produce works of art disagree; those who comment on works of art disagree; while the multitude, anxious to admire where they "ought,"

[1] "Great" in criticism commonly expresses quality, not mere quantity.

and pathetically reluctant to admire where they "ought not," disagree like their teachers.

What then, it may be asked, have I to offer in mitigation of a view which seems so degrading to emotions and activities which we rate (truly, I think) among the highest of which we are capable? Not much, perhaps; not enough, certainly; yet still something.

For what are the æsthetic emotions about which we have been occupied in these pages? They are the highest members of a great class whose common characteristic is that they do not lead to action. It is their peculiarity and their glory that they have nothing to do with business, with the adaptation of means to ends, with the bustle and the dust of life. They are impractical and purposeless. They serve no interest, and further no cause. They are self-sufficing, and neither point to any good beyond themselves, nor overflow except by accident into any practical activities.

This statement is no doubt open to many misunderstandings. I will mention some, though I will not dwell on them. It may be said, for instance, that the description is incomplete in that it refers only to those who enjoy works of art, not to those who create them. It deals with readers, not authors; hearers, not musicians; those who look at pictures, not those who paint them. This is true,

but is surely no objection. I am concerned here with the criticism of beauty—not with its production. These are separate matters, and should be separately considered.

Again, it may be asked—how can æsthetic feelings be described as essentially purposeless and self-sufficing? Does sacred art aim only at producing emotion divorced from action? Has architecture nothing to do with the adaptation of means to ends? Are military marches primarily composed for those who listen to them in tea-gardens?

But this is to confuse the object of the artist with the feelings of those who enjoy his art. Now undoubtedly the objects of the artist may be manifold. Milton, as we know, wrote *Paradise Lost* in order (among other things) to "justify the ways of God to man." We read him, however, for his poetry, not for his theology; and it is only with the æsthetic side of his, or any other artist's, work that we are here concerned.

But again, it may be said that, quite irrespective of the deliberate intention of the artist, the emotions he suggests may tend to foster dispositions which, for good or ill, have far-reaching effects on practice. This again is true. Most persons admit that art may "elevate." It is scarcely to be denied that it may also demoralise. But this does not touch the point. We may surely hold that the use

or abuse of contemplative pleasures affects character, and yet deny that these pleasures are immediately related to action.

But one further observation seems to be required in the way of explanation. I have described æsthetic feelings as "members of a great class." What does this mean? What are the other members of the class? They are many, and the experiences which occasion them are infinite in their variety. Some are emotionally valueless: others are worse than valueless—they are displeasing. Of those which possess value some are closely allied to æsthetic feeling proper—for instance, the delight in what (outside art) is fitting and harmonious, the appreciation of neatness, finish, and skill. Of a different kind are the pleasures of intellectual apprehension; those, for example, which are aroused by a far-reaching scientific generalisation, or the solution, brilliant in its simplicity, of some complicated and entangled problem. These pleasures may be very vivid; they may also be far removed from all practical interests. They must therefore be regarded as contemplative, though it would violate ordinary usage to describe them as æsthetic.

There are, however, other kinds of feeling which are closely associated with the practical side of life. These always look beyond themselves; if not prompting some action they are always on the edge

of prompting it. Action is their fitting and characteristic issue. Like the feelings which I have loosely described as contemplative, they are often intrinsically worthless, or worse than worthless. Thus the sentiment of fear, though presumably it has its uses, can never in itself be either agreeable or noble. But some emotions there are belonging to the active class which possess the highest intrinsic value of which we have any knowledge. Such is love—love of God, of country, of family, of friends. These emotions, like those of fear or appetite, will, on fit occasions, inevitably result in deeds; nor can they be considered genuine, if in this respect they fail. But they have an inherent value apart from their practical effects. We cannot measure their worth solely by their external consequences: if we attempt it, we fall inevitably into the gravest error.

The distinction, it should be observed, between these two classes of feelings does not necessarily imply that they are excited by different kinds of objects. On the contrary, the same object may, and constantly does, excite feelings of both kinds. The splendours of a tempestuous sunset seen from a sheltered balcony give contemplative delight of a high order. The same spectacle, seen by a footsore traveller across a naked moor, may be only a spur to painful effort. A trumpet heard in a concert-room merely heightens an orchestral effect; heard

in camp, it imperiously calls to arms. And (to give one more illustration) wars and revolutions, the struggles of nations and of creeds, are one thing to a man who shares them, quite another to the man who reads of them in history. While history itself is, to those who study it for sheer interest in the doings of mankind, an art, and one of the greatest; to those who study it that they may "learn its lessons," refute a political opponent, or pass a competitive examination, no more than a branch of useful knowledge.

Here, then, we have two great divisions of feeling—the one self-sufficing, contemplative, not looking beyond its own boundaries nor except by accident prompting to action; the other lying at the root of conduct, always having some external reference, supplying the immediate motive for all the doings of mankind. Of highest value in the contemplative division is the feeling of beauty; of highest value in the active division is the feeling of love. It is with these two only that I am here concerned, and it is on the comparison between them that my final contention is founded.

For what was it that occasioned, and I hope justified, this excursion into regions apparently far removed from the primary subject of this lecture? It was the desire to mitigate as far as possible the conclusions to which, in the vain search for some

standard of æsthetic excellence, we seemed irresistibly driven. I see no method of refuting those conclusions; the arguments on which they rest, to me at least, appear irresistible. But are they so very alarming? Do they necessarily lead to a perverse and sceptical individualism? Does the destruction of æsthetic orthodoxy carry with it, as an indirect but inevitable consequence, the diminution of æsthetic values? I think not. And I think not, because no such consequences follow from a like state of things in the great class of feelings which I have described as active or "practical." Love is governed by no abstract principles. It obeys no universal rules. It knows no objective standard. It is obstinately recalcitrant to logic. Why should we be impatient because we can give no account of the characteristics common to all that is beautiful, when we can give no account of the characteristics common to all that is lovable? It may be easy enough for the sociologist to explain in general terms how necessary it is for the well-being of any community that there should be found among its members a widespread capacity for disinterested affection. And it is not hard to show that, in the general interests, it is highly desirable that this affection should flow, in the main, along certain well-defined channels. It is better, for example, that a man should love his own country and his own fam-

ily, than someone else's country and someone else's family. But though ethical, religious, and utilitarian considerations are thus bound up more closely with our practical emotions than with our contemplative ones, we can make abstraction of them in the one case as in the other. And if we do, will it be found easier to fix a measure of the "lovable" than we have found it to fix a measure of the beautiful? I do not believe it. We talk indeed of some person or some collection of persons possessing qualities which *deserve* our love. And the phrase is not unmeaning. It has, as we have seen, its parallel in the region of æsthetics. But love in its intensest quality does not go by deserts, any more than æsthetic feeling in its intensest quality depends on any measurable excellence. That is for every man most lovable which he most dearly loves. That is for every man most beautiful which he most deeply admires. Nor is this merely a reiteration of the old adage that there is no disputing about tastes. It goes far deeper; for it implies that, in the most important cases of all, a dispute about either love or beauty would not merely be useless: it would be wholly unmeaning.

Let us, then, be content, since we can do no better, that our admirations should be even as our loves. I do not offer this advice as a theory of æsthetics, nor even as a substitute for such a theory.

I must repeat, indeed, that so far as I am concerned, it represents a point of view which is not tolerable, even provisionally, unless there be added to it some mystical reference to first and final causes. This, however, opens a train of thought far outside the scope of the present lecture; far outside the scope of any lecture that I am qualified to deliver. For us, here and now, it must suffice that however clearly we may recognise the failure of critical theory to establish the "objective" reality of beauty, the failure finds a parallel in other regions of speculation, and that nevertheless, with or without theoretical support, admiration and love are the best and greatest possessions which we have it in our power to enjoy.

PART ONE: SPECULATIVE

III: BERGSON'S CREATIVE EVOLUTION

III

BERGSON'S CREATIVE EVOLUTION [1]

I

I HAVE been requested by the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal* to indicate the bearing which M. Bergson's *Évolution créatrice* has upon the line of speculation which I have long endeavoured to recommend to those who are interested in such matters.

If I accept the invitation, it is not because I imagine that any widespread interest is felt in my philosophical opinions, still less because I suppose them to provide a standard of comparison against which such theories as those of M. Bergson may fittingly be measured. It is rather because, in dealing with a writer whose range is so wide, some limitation of commentary is desirable; and, in the nature of things, the limitation suggested by the Editor is the one most suited to my particular capacities. It may involve some appearance of ego-

[1] Article contributed to the *Hibbert Journal,* October 1911.

tism; but I trust the reader will understand that it is appearance only.

The problems in which philosophy is interested may, of course, be approached from many sides; and schemes of philosophy may be cast in many moulds. The great metaphysical systems—those which stand out as landmarks in the history of speculation—have commonly professed some all-inclusive theory of reality. In their theories of the One and the Many, it is the One rather than any individual specimen of the Many which has mainly interested them. In the sweep of their soaring speculation, the individual thinker, and the matters which most closely concern him, vanish into negligible particularity. There is room for them, of course, because in such systems there is room for everything. But they hardly count.

Now it must be owned that when the universe is in question, we and our affairs *are* very unimportant. But each several man has a position, as of right, in his own philosophy, from which nothing can exclude him. His theory of things, if he has one, is resolvable into separate beliefs, which are *his* beliefs. In so far as it is a reasoned theory, these beliefs must be rationally selected; and in every system of rationally selected beliefs there must be some which are accepted as inferences, while there must be others whose acceptability is

native, not derived, which are believed on their own merits, and which, if the system were ever completed, would be the logical foundations of the whole. Some beliefs may indeed have both attributes; the light they give may be in part original, in part reflected. We may even conceive a system tentatively constructed out of elements which are first clearly seen to be true only when they are looked at as parts of a self-evident whole; cases in which one might almost say (but not quite) that the conclusion is the proof of the premises, rather than the premises of the conclusion.

It will be observed that this way of looking at philosophy makes each individual thinker the centre of his own system—not, of course, the most important element in it *as known,* but the final authority which justifies him in saying *he knows it.* The ideal order of beliefs as set out in such a system would be the order of logic—not necessarily formal logic, but at least an order of rational interdependence. There is, however, another way in which beliefs might be arranged—namely, the causal order. They may be looked at from the point of view proper to psychology, instead of from that proper to philosophy. They may be looked at not merely as premises but as causes, not merely as conclusions but as effects; and so looked at, it is at once obvious that among the causes of belief reasons

often play a very trifling part, and that among the effects of reason we cannot count conclusions which logically might be drawn, but in fact are not.

This general way of considering philosophic problems, which throws the primary stress not on what is first in the absolute order of reality, nor first in order of practical interest, but what is first in order of logic for the individual thinker, was forced upon me (I speak of a time more than forty years ago) by a condition of things in the world of speculation which has since greatly changed. In those days, at least at the English Universities, the dominating influences were John Mill and Herbert Spencer—Mill even more than Spencer. Their doctrines, or a general attitude of mind in harmony with their doctrines, penetrated far more deeply into the mental tissue of the "enlightened" than has been the case with subsequent philosophies. The fashionable creed of "advanced" thinkers was scientific agnosticism. And the cardinal principles of scientific agnosticism taught that all knowledge was from experience, that all experience was of phenomena, that all we can learn from the experience of phenomena are the laws of phenomena, and that if these are not the real, then is the real unknowable. To their "credo" was appended an appropriate anathema, condemning all those who be-

lieved what they could not prove, as sinners against reason and truth.

Theories like these were a challenge; a challenge, however, that could be taken up in more ways than one. It might be said, as metaphysics and theology did say, that reason, properly interrogated, carries us far beyond phenomena and the laws of phenomena. On the other hand, attention might be concentrated not on what the agnostics said was unknowable, but on what they said was known. If the great desideratum is untrammelled criticism of beliefs, let us begin with the beliefs of "positive knowledge." If we are to believe nothing but what we can prove, let us see what it is that we *can* prove.

I attempted some studies on these lines in a work published in 1879.[1] And I am still of opinion that the theory of experience and of induction from experience needs further examination; that the relation between a series of beliefs connected logically, and the same beliefs mixed up in a natural series of cause and effects, involves speculative difficulties of much interest; and that investigations into the ultimate grounds of belief had better begin with the beliefs which everybody holds than with those which are held only by a philosophic or religious minority.

It is true that isolated fragments of these prob-

[1] *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt.*

lems have long interested philosophers. Achilles still pursues the tortoise, and the difficulties of the chase still provide a convenient text on which to preach conflicting doctrines of the Infinite. The question as to what exactly is given in immediate experience, and by what logical or inductive process anything can be inferred from it; the nature of causation, the grounds of our conviction that Nature obeys laws, how a law can be discovered, and whether "obeying laws" is the same as having a determined order—these, or some of these, have no doubt been subjects of debate. But even now there is not, so far as I know, any thoroughgoing treatment of the subject as I conceive it; and certainly Mill, who was supposed to have uttered the last word on empirical inference, stared helplessly at its difficulties through two volumes of logic, and left them unsolved at the end.

It was not on these lines, however, that the reaction against the reigning school of philosophy was to be pursued. In the last twenty years or so of the nineteenth century came (in England) the great idealist revival. For the first time since Locke the general stream of British philosophy rejoined, for good or evil, the main continental river. And I should suppose that now in 1911 the bulk of philosophers belong to the neo-Kantian or neo-Hegelian school. I do not know that this has

greatly influenced either the general public or the scientific world. But, without question, it has greatly affected not merely professed philosophers, but students of theology with philosophic leanings. The result has been that whereas, when Mill and Spencer dominated the schools, "naturalism" was thought to have philosophy at its back, that advantage, for what it is worth, was transferred to religion. I do not mean that philosophy became the ally of any particular form of orthodoxy, but that it advocated a spiritual view of the Universe, and was therefore quite inconsistent with "naturalism."

Though I may not count myself as an idealist, I can heartily rejoice in the result. But it could obviously give me very little assistance in my own attempts to develop the negative speculations of philosophic doubt into a constructive, if provisional, system. With the arguments of *Foundations of Belief* I do not propose to trouble the reader. But it may make clearer what I have to say about *L'Évolution créatrice* if I mention that (among other conclusions) I arrive at the conviction that in accepting science, as we all do, we are moved by "values," not by logic. That if we examine fearlessly the grounds on which judgments about the material world are founded, we shall find that they rest on postulates about which it is equally impossible to say that we can theoretically

regard them as self-evident, or practically treat them as doubtful. We can neither prove them nor give them up. "Concede" (I argued) the same philosophic weight to values in departments of speculation which look beyond the material world, and naturalism will have to be abandoned. But the philosophy of science would not lose thereby. On the contrary, an extension of view beyond phenomena diminishes rather than increases the theoretical difficulties with which bare naturalism is beset. It is not by a mere reduction in the area of our beliefs that, in the present state of our knowledge, certainty and consistency are to be reached. Such a reduction could not be justified by philosophy. But justifiable or not, it would be quite impracticable. "Values" refuse to be ignored.

A scheme of thought so obviously provisional has no claim to be a system. And the question therefore arises—at least, it arises for me—whether the fruitful philosophic labours of the last twenty years have found answers to the problem which I find most perplexing? I cannot pretend to have followed as closely as I should have desired the recent developments of speculation in Britain and America—still less in Germany, France, or Italy. Even were it otherwise, I could not profitably discuss them within the compass of an article. But the invitation to consider from this point of view a

work so important as *L'Évolution créatrice,* by an author so distinguished as M. Bergson, I have found irresistible.

II

There cannot be a topic which provides a more fitting text for what I have to say in this connection than freedom. To the idealist, absolute spirit is free; though when we come to the individual soul I am not sure that its share of freedom amounts (in most systems) to very much. To the naturalistic thinker there is, of course, no absolute, and no soul. Psychic phenomena are a function of the nervous system. The nervous system is material, and obeys the laws of matter. Its behaviour is as rigidly determined as the planetary orbits, and might be accurately deduced by a being sufficiently endowed with powers of calculation, from the distribution of matter, motion, and force, when the solar system was still nebular. To me, who am neither idealist nor naturalist, freedom is a reality; partly because, on ethical grounds, I am not prepared to give it up; partly because any theory which, like "naturalism," requires reason to be mechanically determined, is (I believe) essentially incoherent; partly because if we abandon mechanical determinism in the case of reason, it seems absurd to retain it in the case of will; partly because it

seems impossible to find room for the self and its psychic states in the interstices of a rigid sequence of material causes and effects. Yet the material sequence is there; the self and its states are there; and I do not pretend to have arrived at a satisfactory view of their reciprocal relations. I keep them both, conscious of their incompatibilities.

A bolder line is taken by M. Bergson, and his point of view, be it right or wrong, is certainly far more interesting. He is not content with refusing to allow mechanical or any other form of determinism to dominate life. He makes freedom the very corner-stone of his system—freedom in its most aggressive shape. Life is free, life is spontaneous, life is incalculable. It is not indeed out of relation to matter, for matter clogs and hampers it. But not by matter is its direction wholly determined, not from matter is its forward impulse derived.

As we know it upon this earth, life resembles some great river system, pouring in many channels across the plain. Our stream dies away sluggishly in the sand, another loses itself in some inland lake, while a third, more powerful or more fortunate, drives its tortuous and arbitrary windings further and yet further from the snows that gave it birth.

The metaphor, for which M. Bergson should not be made responsible, may serve to emphasise some

leading portions of his theory. What the banks of the stream are to its current, that matter in general, and the living organism in particular, is to terrestrial life. They modify its course; they do not make it move. So life presses on by its own inherent impulse; not unhampered by the inert mass through which it flows, yet constantly struggling with it, eating patiently into the most recalcitrant rock, breaking through the softer soil in channels the least foreseen, never exactly repeating its past, never running twice the same course. The metaphor, were it completed, would suggest that as the rivers, through all the windings imposed on them by the channel which they themselves have made, press ever towards the sea, so life has some end to which its free endeavours are directed. But this is not M. Bergson's view. He objects to teleology only less than to mechanical determinism. And, if I understand him aright, the vital impulse has no goal more definite than that of acquiring an ever fuller volume of free creative activity.

But what in M. Bergson's theory corresponds to the sources of these multitudinous streams of life? Whence come they? The life we see—the life of plants, of animals, of men—has its origin in the single life which he calls super-consciousness, above matter and beyond it; which divides, like the snow-fields of our simile, into various lines of flow, cor-

responding to the lines of organic development described by evolutionary biology. But as the original source of organic life is free, indeterminate, and incalculable, so this quality never utterly disappears from its derivative streams, entangled and thwarted though they be by matter. Life, even the humblest life, does not wholly lose its original birthright, nor does it succumb completely to its mechanical environment.

Now it is evident that if the ultimate reality is this free creative activity, *time* must occupy a position in M. Bergson's philosophy quite other than that which it holds in any of the great metaphysical systems. For in these, time and temporal relation are but elements within an Absolute, itself conceived as timeless; whereas M. Bergson's Absolute almost resolves itself into time—evolving, as it were by a free effort, new forms at each instant of a continuous flow. A true account of the Absolute would therefore take the form of history. It would tell us of the Absolute that has been and is, the Absolute "up to date." Of the Absolute that is to be, no account can be given; its essential contingency puts its future beyond the reach of any powers of calculation, even were those powers infinite in their grasp.

Now this view of reality, expounded by its author with a wealth of scientific as well as of philosophical

knowledge which must make his writings fascinating and instructive to those who least agree with them, suggests far more questions than it would be possible merely to catalogue, much less to discuss, within the limits of this paper. But there is one aspect of the theory from my point of view of fundamental interest on which something must be said—I mean the relation of M. Bergson's free creative consciousness to organised life and to unorganised matter—to that physical Universe with which biology, chemistry, and physics are concerned.

This subject may be considered from three points of view: (1) the relation of organic life to the matter in which it is immersed; (2) the relation of primordial life and consciousness to matter in general; (3) our justification for arriving at conclusions under either of these heads.

M. Bergson, while denying that life—will—consciousness, as we know them on this earth of ours, are mere functions of the material organism, does not, as we have seen, deny that they, in a sense, depend on it. They depend on it as a workman depends on a tool. It limits him, though he uses it.

Now the way in which life uses the organism in which it is embodied is by releasing at will the energy which the organism has obtained directly or indirectly from the sun—directly in the case of plants, indirectly in the case of animals. The plants

hoard much but use little. The animals appropriate their savings.

To M. Bergson, therefore, organised life essentially shows itself in the sudden and quasi-explosive release of these accumulations. Indeed he carries this idea so far as to suggest that any material system which should store energy by arresting its degradation to some lower level,[1] and should produce effects by its sudden liberation, would exhibit something in the nature of life. But this is surely going too far. There are plenty of machines used for manufacturing or domestic purposes which do just this; while in the realm of Nature there seems no essential physical distinction between (on the one hand) the storing up of solar radiation by plants and its discharge in muscular action; and (on the other) the slow production of aqueous vapour, and its discharge during a thunderstorm in torrential rain. Yet all would admit that the first is life, while the second is but mechanism.

It is rash to suggest that a thinker like M. Bergson has wrongly emphasised his own doctrines. Yet I venture, with great diffidence, to suggest that the really important point in this part of his theory, the point where his philosophy breaks finally with

[1] This refers to the second law of thermodynamics. It is interesting to observe that M. Bergson regards this as philosophically more important than the first law.

"mechanism," the point where freedom and indeterminism are really introduced into the world of space and matter, is only indirectly connected with the bare fact that in organic life accumulated energy is released. What is really essential is the *manner* of its release. If the release be effected by pure mechanism, fate still reigns supreme. If, on the other hand, there be anything in the mode of release, however trifling, which could not be exhaustively accounted for by the laws of matter and motion, then freedom gains a foothold in the very citadel of necessity. Make the hair-trigger which is to cause the discharge as delicate as you please, yet if it be pulled by forces dependent wholly upon the configuration and energy of the material universe at the moment, you are nothing advanced. Determinism still holds you firmly in its grip. But if there be introduced into the system a new force—in other words, a new creation—though it be far too minute for any instrument to register, then if it either pull the trigger or direct the explosion, the reality of contingency is established, and our whole conception of the physical world is radically transformed.

This, I conceive, must be M. Bergson's view. But his theory of the relation between life—freedom—will, on the one side, and matter on the other, goes much further than the mere assertion that there is in fact an element of contingency in the move-

ments of living organisms. For he regards this both as a consequence and as a sign of an effort made by creative will to bring mechanism more and more under the control of freedom. Such efforts have, as biology tells us, often proved abortive. Some successes that have been won have had again to be surrendered. Advance, as in the case of many parasites, has been followed by retrogression. By comparing the molluscs, whose torpid lives have been repeating themselves without sensible variation through all our geological records, with man, in whom is embodied the best we know of consciousness and will, we may measure the success which has so far attended the efforts of super-consciousness in this portion of the Universe.

I say, in this portion of the Universe, because M. Bergson thinks it not only possible but probable that elsewhere in space the struggle between freedom and necessity, between life and matter, may be carried on through the sudden liberation of other forms of energy than those which plants accumulate by forcibly divorcing the oxygen and the carbon atoms combined in our atmosphere. The speculation is interesting, though, from the point of view of science, somewhat hazardous. From the point of view of M. Bergson's metaphysic, however, it is almost a necessity. For his metaphysic, like every metaphysic, aims at embracing all reality; and as

the relation between life and matter is an essential part of it, the matter with which he deals cannot be restricted to that which constitutes our negligible fraction of the physical world.

But what, according to his metaphysic, *is* the relation of life, consciousness, in general, to matter in general? His theory of *organic* life cannot stand alone. For it does not get us beyond individual living things, struggling freely, but separately, with their own organisms, with each other, and with the inert mass of the physical world which lies around them. But what the history of all this may be, whence comes individual life, and whence comes matter, and what may be the fundamental relation between the two—this has still to be explained.

And, frankly, the task of explanation for anyone less gifted than M. Bergson himself is not an easy one. The first stage, indeed, whether easy or not, is at least familiar. M. Bergson thinks, with other great masters of speculation, that consciousness, life, spirit is the *prius* of all that is, be it physical or mental. But let me repeat that the *prius* is, in his view, no all-inclusive absolute, of which our world, the world evolving in time, is but an aspect or phase. His theory, whatever its subsequent difficulties may be, is less remote from common-sense. For duration with him is, as we have seen, something pre-eminently real. It is not to be sep-

arated from the creative consciousness. It is no abstract emptiness, filled up by successive happenings, placed (as it were) end to end. It must rather be regarded as an agent in that continuous process of free creation which is life itself.

Since, then, consciousness and matter are not to be regarded as entities of independent origin, ranged against one another from eternity, like the good and evil principles of Zoroaster, what is the relation between them? If I understand M. Bergson aright, matter must be regarded as a by-product of the evolutionary process. The primordial consciousness falls, as it were, asunder. On the one side it rises to an ever fuller measure of creative freedom; on the other, it lapses into matter, determinism, mechanical adjustment, space. Space with him, therefore, is not, as with most other philosophers, a correlative of time. It has not the same rank (whatever that may be) in the hierarchy of being. For, while Time is of the essence of primordial activity, space is but the limiting term of those material elements which are no more than its backwash.

I do not, of course, for a moment delude myself into the belief that I have made these high speculations clear and easy. The reader, justly incensed by my rendering of M. Bergson's doctrine, must find his remedy in M. Bergson's own admirable

exposition. I may, however, have done enough to enable me to make intelligible certain difficulties which press upon me, and may, perhaps, press also upon others.

III

Hegel's imposing system professed to exhibit the necessary stages in the timeless evolution of the Idea. Has M. Bergson any corresponding intention? The evolution, to be sure, with which he deals is not timeless; on the contrary, it is, as we have seen, most intimately welded to duration—a difference of which I am the last to complain. This, however, taken by itself, need be no bar to explanation. But how if we take it in connection with his fundamental principle that creative evolution is essentially indeterminate and contingent? How can the movements of the indeterminate and the contingent be explained? I should myself have supposed the task impossible. But M. Bergson holds that events which, because they are contingent, even infinite powers of calculation could not foresee, may yet be accounted for, even by our very modest powers of thought, after they have occurred. I own this somewhat surprises me. And my difficulty is increased by the reflection that free consciousness pursues no final end, it follows no predetermined design. It struggles, it expends

itself in effort, it stretches ever towards completer freedom, but it has no plans. Now, when we are dealing with a fragment of this consciousness embodied in a human being, we regard ourselves as having "explained" his action when we have obtained a rough idea of his objects and of his opportunities. We know, of course, that our explanation must be imperfect; we know ourselves to be ignorant of innumerable elements required for a full comprehension of the problem. But we are content with the best that can be got—and this "best," be it observed, is practically the same whether we believe in determinism or believe in free will. Of primordial consciousness, however, we know neither the objects nor the opportunities. It follows no designs, it obeys no laws. The sort of explanation, therefore, which satisfies us when we are dealing with one of its organic embodiments, seems hard of attainment in the case of primordial consciousness itself. I cannot, at least, persuade myself that M. Bergson has attained it. Why should free consciousness first produce, and then, as it were, shed, mechanically determined matter? Why, having done so, should it set to work to permeate this same matter with contingency? Why should it allow itself to be split up by matter into separate individualities? Why, in short, should it ever have engaged in that long and doubtful battle

between freedom and necessity which we call organic evolution?

It may be replied that these objections, or objections of like pattern, may be urged against any cosmogony whatever; that the most successful philosophy cannot hope to smooth away all difficulties; and that in metaphysics, as in other affairs, we must be content, not with the best we can imagine, but with the least imperfect we can obtain. To this modest programme I heartily subscribe. Yet fully granting that, in the present state of our knowledge, every metaphysic must be defective, we cannot accept any particular metaphysic without some grounds of belief, be they speculative, empirical, or practical; and the question therefore arises—On what grounds are we asked to accept the metaphysic of M. Bergson?

This brings us to what is perhaps the most suggestive, and is certainly the most difficult, portion of his whole doctrine—I mean his theory of knowledge. The magnitude of that difficulty will be at once realised when I say that in M. Bergson's view not reason, but instinct, brings us into the closest touch, the directest relation, with what is most real in the Universe. For reason is at home, not with life and freedom, but with matter, mechanism, and space—the waste products of the creative impulse. We need not wonder, then, that reason should feel

at home in the realm of matter; that it should successfully cut up the undivided flow of material change into particular sequences which are repeated, or are capable of repetition, and which exemplify "natural laws"; that it should manipulate long trains of abstract mathematical inference, and find that their remotest conclusion fits closely to observed fact. For matter and reason own, according to M. Bergson, a common origin; and the second was evolved in order that we might cope successfully with the first.

Instinct, which finds its greatest development among bees and ants, though incomparably inferior to reason in its range, is yet in touch with a higher order of truth, for it is in touch with life itself. In the perennial struggle between freedom and necessity which began when life first sought to introduce contingency into matter, everything, it seems, could not be carried along the same line of advance. Super-consciousness was like an army suddenly involved in a new and difficult country. If the infantry took one route, the artillery must travel by another. The powers of creation would have been overtasked had it been attempted to develop the instinct of the bee along the same evolutionary track as the reason of the man. But man is not, therefore, wholly without instinct, nor does he completely lack the powers of directly appre-

hending life. In rare moments of tension, when his whole being is wound up for action, when memory seems fused with will and desire into a single impulse to *do—then* he knows freedom, *then* he touches reality, *then* he consciously sweeps along with the advancing wave of Time, which, as it moves, creates.

However obscure to reflective thought such mystic utterances may seem, many will read them with a secret sympathy. But, from the point of view occupied by M. Bergson's own philosophy, do they not suggest questions of difficulty? How comes it that if instinct be the appropriate organ for apprehending free reality, bees and ants, whose range of freedom is so small, should have so much of it? How comes it that man, the freest animal of them all, should specially delight himself in the exercise of reason, the faculty brought into existence to deal with matter and necessity? M. Bergson is quite aware of the paradox, but does he anywhere fully explain it?

This is, however, comparatively speaking, a small matter. The difficulties which many will find in the system, as I have just described it, lie deeper. Their first inclination will be to regard it as a fantastic construction, in many parts difficult of comprehension, in no part capable of proof. They will attach no evidential value to the unverified

visions attributed to the Hymenoptera, and little to the flashes of illumination enjoyed by man. The whole scheme will seem to them arbitrary and unreal, owing more to poetical imagination than to scientific knowledge or philosophic insight.

Such a judgment would certainly be wrong; and if made at all, will, I fear, be due in no small measure to my imperfect summary. The difficulties of such a summary are indeed very great, not through the defects but the merits of the author summarised. The original picture is so rich in suggestive detail that adequate reproduction on a smaller scale is barely possible. Moreover, M. Bergson's *Évolution créatrice* is not merely a philosophic treatise, it has all the charms and all the audacities of a work of art, and as such defies adequate reproduction. Yet let no man regard it as an unsubstantial vision. One of its peculiarities is the intimate and, at first sight, the singular mingling of minute scientific statement with the boldest metaphysical speculation. This is not accidental; it is of the essence of M. Bergson's method. For his metaphysic may, in a sense, be called empirical. It is no *a priori* construction, any more than it is a branch of physics or biology. It is a philosophy, but a philosophy which never wearies in its appeals to concrete science.

If, for example, you ask why M. Bergson sup-

poses a common super-physical source for the diverging lines of organic evolution, he would say that, with all their differences, they showed occasional similarities of development not otherwise to be explained; and in proof he would compare the eye of the man with the eye of the mollusc. If, again, you asked him why, after crediting this common source of organic life with consciousness and will, he refuses it purpose, he would reply that evolution showed the presence of "drive," "impulse," creative "effort," but no plan of operations, and many failures. If you asked him why he supposed that matter as well as life was due to primordial consciousness, he would say (as we have seen) that in no other manner can you account for the ease and success with which reason measures, classifies, and calculates when it is dealing with the material world. Plainly this pre-established harmony is best accounted for by a common origin.

It must be owned that in M. Bergson's dexterous hands this form of argument from the present to the past is almost too supple. Whether diverging lines of development show unlooked-for similarities or puzzling discords is all one to him. Either event finds him ready. In the first case the phenomenon is simply accounted for by community of origin; in the second case it is accounted for—less simply—by his doctrine that each particular

evolutionary road is easily overcrowded, and that if creative will insists on using it, something must be dropped by the way.

Even the most abstruse and subtle parts of his system make appeal to natural science. Consider, for example, the sharp distinction which he draws between the operations of mechanism and reason on the one side, creation and instinct on the other. Reason, analysing some very complex organ like the eye and its complementary nervous structure, perceives that it is compounded of innumerable minute elements, each of which requires the nicest adjustment if it is to serve its purpose, and all of which are mutually interdependent. It tries to imagine external and mechanical methods by which this intricate puzzle could have been put together —e.g. selection out of chance variations. In M. Bergson's opinion, all such theories—true, no doubt, as far as they go—are inadequate. He supplements or replaces them by quite a different view. From the external and mechanical standpoint necessarily adopted by reason, the complexity seems infinite, the task of co-ordination impossible. But looked at from the inside, from the position which creation occupies and instinct comprehends, there is no such complexity and no such difficulty. Observe how certain kinds of wasp, when paralysing their victim, show a knowledge of anatomy

which no morphologist could surpass, and a skill which few surgeons could equal. Are we to suppose these dexterities to be the result of innumerable experiments somehow bred into the race? Are we to suppose it the result, e.g. of natural selection working upon minute variation? Or are we to suppose it due to some important heritable mutation? No, says M. Bergson; none of these explanations, nor any like them, are admissible. If the problem was one of mechanism, if it were as complicated as reason, contemplating it from without, necessarily supposes, then it would be insoluble. But to the wasp it is not insoluble; for the wasp looks at it from within, and is in touch, through instinct, with life itself.

This enumeration is far from exhausting the biological arguments which M. Bergson draws from his ample stores in favour of his views on the beginnings of organic life. Yet I cannot feel sure that even he succeeds in quarrying out of natural science foundations strong enough to support the full weight of his metaphysic. Even if it be granted (and by naturalistic thinkers it will not be granted) that life always carries with it a trace of freedom or contingency, and that this grows greater as organisms develop, why should we therefore suppose that life existed before its first humble beginnings on this earth, why should we call in

super-consciousness? M. Bergson regards matter as the dam which keeps back the rush of life. Organise it a little (as in the Protozoa)—i.e. slightly raise the sluice—and a little life will squeeze through. Organise it elaborately (as in man)—i.e. raise the sluice a good deal—and much life will squeeze through. Now this may be a very plausible opinion if the flood of life be really there, beating against matter till it forces an entry through the narrow slit of undifferentiated protoplasm. But is it there? Science, modestly professing ignorance, can stumble along without it; and I question whether philosophy, with only scientific data to work upon, can establish its reality.

In truth, when we consider the manner in which M. Bergson uses his science to support his metaphysic, we are reminded of the familiar theistic argument from design, save that most of the design is left out. Theologians were wont to point to the marvellous adjustments with which the organic world abounds, and ask whether such intelligent contrivances did not compel belief in an intelligent contriver. The argument evidently proceeds on the principle that when all imaginable physical explanations fail, appeal may properly be made to an explanation which is metaphysical. Now, I do not say that this is either bad logic or bad philosophy; but I do say that it supplies no solid or immutable

basis for a metaphysic. Particular applications of it are always at the mercy of new scientific discovery. Applications of the greatest possible plausibility were, as we all know, made meaningless by Darwin's discovery. Adaptations which seemed to supply conclusive proofs of design were found to be explicable, at least in the first instance, by natural selection. What has happened before may happen again. The apparently inexplicable may find an explanation within the narrowest limits of natural science. Mechanism may be equal to playing the part which a spiritual philosophy had assigned to consciousness. When, therefore, M. Bergson tells us that the appearance of an organ so peculiar as the eye in lines of evolution so widely separated as the molluscs and the vertebrates implies not only a common ancestral origin, but a common *pre*-ancestral origin; or when he points out how hard it is to account for certain most complicated cases of adaptation by any known theory of heredity, we may admit the difficulty, yet hesitate to accept the solution. We feel the peril of basing our beliefs upon a kind of ignorance which may at any moment be diminished or removed.

Now, I do not suggest that M. Bergson's system, looked at as a whole, suffers from this kind of weakness. On the contrary, I think that if the implications of his system be carefully studied, it will be

seen that he draws support from sources of a very different kind, and in particular from two which *must* be drawn upon (as I think) if the inadequacy of naturalism is to be fully revealed.

The first is the theory of knowledge. If naturalism be accepted, then our whole apparatus for arriving at truth, all the beliefs in which that truth is embodied, reason, instinct, and their legitimate results, are the product of irrational forces. If they are the product of irrational forces, whence comes their authority? If to this it be replied that the principles of evolution, which naturalism accepts from science, would tend to produce faculties adapted to the discovery of truth, I reply, in the first place, that this is no solution of the difficulty, and wholly fails to extricate us from the logical circle. I reply, in the second place, that the only faculties which evolution, acting through natural selection, would tend to produce, are those which enable individuals, or herds, or societies to survive. Speculative capacity—the capacity, for example, to frame a naturalistic theory of the universe—if we have it at all, must be a by-product. What nature is really concerned with is that we should eat, breed, and bring up our young. The rest is accident.

Now M. Bergson does not directly interest himself in this negative argument, on which I have

dwelt elsewhere.[1] But I think his whole constructive theory of reason and instinct is really based on the impossibility of accepting blind mechanism as the source—the efficient cause—of all our knowledge of reality. His theory is difficult. I am not sure that I am competent either to explain or to criticise it. But it seems to me clear that, great as is the wealth of scientific detail with which it is illustrated and enforced, its foundations lie far deeper than the natural sciences can dig.

But it is not only in his theory of knowledge that he shows himself to be moved by considerations with which science has nothing to do. Though the point is not explicitly pressed, it is plain that he takes account of "values," and is content with no philosophy which wholly ignores them. Were it otherwise, could he speak as he does of "freedom," of "creative will," of the "joy" (as distinguished from the pleasure) which fittingly accompanies it? Could he represent the universe as the battle-ground between the opposing forces of freedom and necessity? Could he look on matter as "the enemy"? Could he regard mechanism, determinateness, all that matter stands for, as not merely in process of subjugation, but as things that *ought* to be subdued by the penetrating energies of free consciousness?

[1] For example, in *Foundations of Belief*.

This quasi-ethical ideal is infinitely removed from pure naturalism. It is almost as far removed from any ideal which could be manufactured out of empirical science alone, even granting what naturalism refuses to grant, that organised life exhibits traces of contingency. M. Bergson, if I correctly read his mind, refuses—I think rightly refuses—to tolerate conceptions so ruinous to "values" as these must inevitably prove. But can his own conception of the universe stand where he has placed it? By introducing creative will behind development, he has no doubt profoundly modified the whole evolutionary drama. Matter and mechanism have lost their pride of place. Consciousness has replaced them. The change seems great; nay, it is great. But if things remain exactly where M. Bergson leaves them, is the substantial difference so important as we might at first suppose? What is it that consciousness strives for? What does it accomplish? It strives to penetrate matter with contingency. Why, I do not know. But concede the worth of the enterprise. What measure of success can it possibly attain? A certain number of organic molecules develop into more or less plastic instruments of consciousness and will; consciousness and will, thus armed, inflict a few trifling scratches on the outer crust of our world, and perhaps of worlds elsewhere, but the huge mass of matter remains

and must remain what it has always been—the undisputed realm of lifeless determinism. Freedom, when all has happened that can happen, creeps humbly on its fringe.

I suggest, with great respect, that in so far as M. Bergson has devised his imposing scheme of metaphysic in order to avoid the impotent conclusions of naturalism, he has done well. As the reader knows, I most earnestly insist that no philosophy can at present be other than provisional; and that, in framing a provisional philosophy, "values" may be, and must be, taken into account. My complaint, if I have one, is not that M. Bergson goes too far in this direction, but that he does not go far enough. He somewhat mars his scheme by what is, from *this* point of view, too hesitating and uncertain a treatment.

It is true that he has left naturalism far behind. His theory of a primordial super-consciousness, not less than his theory of freedom, separates him from this school of thought as decisively as his theory of duration, with its corollary of an ever-growing and developing reality, divides him from the great idealists. It is true also that, according to my view, his metaphysic is religious: since I deem the important philosophic distinction between religious and non-religious metaphysic to be that God, or whatever in the system corresponds to God, does in the

former *take sides* in a moving drama, while, with more consistency, but far less truth, he is, in the non-religious metaphysic, represented as indifferently related to all the multiplicity of which he constitutes the unity.[1]

Now, as M. Bergson's super-consciousness does certainly take sides, and, as we have seen, his system suffers to the full from the familiar difficulty to which, in one shape or another, all religious systems (as defined) are liable, namely, that the evils or the defects against which the Creator is waging war are evils and defects in a world of his own creating. But as M. Bergson has gone thus far in opposition both to naturalistic and to metaphysical orthodoxies, would not his scheme gain if he went yet further? Are there no other "values" which he would do well to consider? His super-consciousness has already some quasi-æsthetic and quasi-moral qualities. We must attribute to it joy in full creative effort, and a corresponding alienation from those branches of the evolutionary stem

[1] This view, at greater length and therefore with much less crudity, is expounded in *Foundations of Belief*, p. 308. Since writing this portion of the text I have seen Professor William James' posthumous volume, where an opposite opinion seems to be expressed. I do not think, however, that our disagreement is substantial. I think he means no more than I myself indicated earlier in this article. Let me add, that the last opinion I desire to express is that absolute idealists are not religious.

which, preferring ease to risk and effort, have remained stationary, or even descended in the organic scale. It may be that other values are difficult to include in his scheme, especially if he too rigorously banishes teleology. But why should he banish teleology? In his philosophy super-consciousness is so indeterminate that it is not permitted to hamper itself with any purpose more definite than that of self-augmentation. It is ignorant not only of its course, but of its goal; and for the sufficient reason that, in M. Bergson's view, these things are not only unknown, but unknowable. But is there not a certain incongruity between the substance of such a philosophy and the sentiments associated with it by its author? Creation, freedom, will—these doubtless are great things; but we cannot lastingly admire them unless we know their drift. We cannot, I submit, rest satisfied with what differs so little from the haphazard; joy is no fitting consequence of efforts which are so nearly aimless. If values are to be taken into account, it is surely better to invoke God with a purpose, than super-consciousness with none.

Yet these deficiencies, if deficiencies they be, do little to diminish the debt of gratitude we owe to M. Bergson. Apart altogether from his admirable criticisms, his psychological insight, his charms of style, there is permanent value in his theories. And

those who, like myself, find little satisfaction in the all-inclusive unification of the idealist systems; who cannot, either on rational or any other grounds, accept naturalism as a creed, will always turn with interest and admiration to this brilliant experiment in philosophic construction, so far removed from both.

PART ONE: SPECULATIVE

IV: FRANCIS BACON

IV

FRANCIS BACON [1]

From the very moment at which I rashly agreed to take a leading part in this ceremony I have been occupied in repenting my own temerity. For, indeed, the task which the members of the Honourable Society have thrown upon me is one which I feel very ill qualified to perform; one, indeed, which has some aspects with which many present here to-day are far more fitted to deal than I.

For the great man whose introduction into Gray's Inn some three hundred years ago we have to-day met to commemorate was a member of this Society through his whole adult life. Here he lived before he rose to the highest legal position in the country; here, after his fall, he returned to his old friends and dwelt again among his earlier surroundings. It was to this Inn that he gave some of his most loving work, adorning it, regulating it, and taking a large share both in its pleasures and its business. It would seem, therefore, to be

[1] Speech delivered at the unveiling of the memorial to Lord Bacon in the gardens of Gray's Inn, June 27, 1912.

fitting that the man who unveils the memorial of this distinguished member of Gray's Inn should himself be a member of Gray's Inn, and that a man who speaks in praise of a Lord Chancellor should himself know something of law.

I possess, alas! neither of these qualifications. But I am told by those who are more competent than I to form a judgment on the subject, that Bacon showed, as we might expect, great mastery of legal principles, and that although he did not equal in learning that eminently disagreeable personage, Sir Edward Coke, yet that his views upon law reform were far in advance of his time, and, according to some authorities, had even an effect upon that masterpiece of codification, the *Code Napoléon.*

However this may be, I clearly have no title to say, and do not mean to say, a single word of my own upon Bacon as a lawyer. Upon Bacon as a politician it would not be difficult, and it might be interesting, to dilate. Although I think he lacked that personal force which is a necessary element in the equipment of every successful public man, he yet possessed a breadth of view, a moderation of spirit, which, had his advice been taken, might have altered the history of this country, and even of Europe. It might be an attractive task for those who like drawing imaginary pictures of the his

torical "might-have-been," to conceive a man of Bacon's insight inspiring the policy of a sovereign who had the power and the wish to act upon his advice. Had such a combination existed at the beginning of the seventeenth century we might well have seen a development of parliamentary and constitutional institutions effected at a less cost than civil war; and all the bitterness of political and religious strife, which so greatly hindered our progress at home and so effectually destroyed our influence abroad, might happily have been avoided.

But all this is a dream—a dream that could never have come true under a sovereign like James I. Am I then to turn from the part which under happier circumstances Bacon might have played in public affairs, and discuss the part which in fact he did play? I confess that the subject does not attract me. Anybody who goes to the study of Bacon's life, remembering how his fame has been darkened by the satire of Pope and the rhetoric of Macaulay, must naturally desire to find that these great writers have grossly exaggerated the shadows upon their hero's character. And, indeed, they have exaggerated. Bacon was not a bad man. He was not a cruel man. I believe he loved justice. I am sure he loved good government. And yet, though all this be true, I do not think his admirers can draw much satisfaction from any impartial

survey of his relations either with his family, his friends, his political associates or his political rivals. Much worse men than Bacon have had more interesting characters. They may have committed crimes, both in public and in private life, from which Bacon would have shrunk in horror. But though we condemn them, we are interested in them. I do not think we ever feel any interest in Bacon the politician. Neither his relations with Essex, nor with Salisbury, nor with Buckingham, nor with Queen Elizabeth, nor with James I, put him, however we look at the matter, in a very attractive light. He had not a high courage. I doubt his capacity for uncalculating generosity. I could have wished him a little more pride. I suspect, indeed, that his deficiencies in these respects militated even against his worldly fortunes. Such men are used in public life, but, as a rule, they are neither greatly loved nor greatly trusted.

But do not let us talk of Bacon as though his career were a great tragedy. It was nothing of the sort. He was a philosopher and he was a statesman; and in the age in which he lived there were no two professions which promised the certainty of a more uneasy life or the chance of a more disagreeable death. His first patron, Essex, died on the scaffold. His second patron, Buckingham, was stabbed by Felton; and if you turn from

statesmen to philosophers, how restless was the life of Descartes, how unhappy the career of Galileo, how tragic the end of Giordano Bruno! Now, these were Bacon's contemporaries—these were the politicians with whom he was most closely connected and the philosophers who made his age illustrious. How much more fortunate was his career than theirs! He had not to flee from place to place for fear of persecution, like Descartes. He suffered no long imprisonment, like Galileo. He was never threatened with the executioner's axe, or the assassin's dagger. Nor did he go to the stake, like Bruno. And however low some may rate hereditary honours, everybody will, I think, admit that it is better to be made a viscount than to be burnt.

If I now pass from those aspects of Bacon's life with which, for one reason or another, I am either unqualified or unwilling to deal, I am compelled by a process of exhaustion to consider Bacon as a man of letters, an historian, and a philosopher. He was all three—a writer of the most noble prose, a man richly endowed with the qualities that make an historian, a philosopher whose advent marked the beginning of a great epoch. As a philosopher his fate has been mixed. He has been magnificently praised, both in this country and abroad, by men whose praise is worth much; he has been violently

abused by men whose abuse cannot be lightly thrust aside; and—worst fate of all—his achievements have been vulgarised by some of his most ardent admirers. I do not think this is the occasion on which it would be fitting to attempt a full and balanced judgment on the precise position which Bacon occupies in the history of European philosophy. He has been regarded both by enemies and by friends as the father of that great empirical school of which we in this country have produced perhaps the most illustrious members, though it flourished splendidly in France during the eighteenth century. If this claim be good (I am not sure that it is) Bacon's philosophic position is, for that reason if for no other, a proud one. For whatever we may think of Locke and his successors, the mark they have made on the course of speculation can never be effaced.

I do not, however, propose to deal with these niceties of philosophic history. I shall probably better meet your wishes if I try to say in a very few words what I think was the real nature of the debt which the world owes to Bacon; and why it is that, amid universal approval, we are met here to-day to pay this tribute to his memory.

We shall make (I think) a great mistake if we try to prove that Bacon was, what he always said he was not, a maker of systems. He had neither

the desire, nor I believe the gifts, which would have qualified him to be the architect of one of those great speculative systems which exist for the wonder, and perhaps for the instruction, of mankind. But if he was not a system-maker, what was he? He was a prophet and a seer. No doubt he aimed at more. He spent much time in attacking his philosophical predecessors, and took endless trouble with the details of his inductive method. Of his criticisms it is easy to say, and true, that they were often violent and not always fair. Of his inductive logic it is easy to say, and true, that he did not produce, as he hoped, an instrument of discovery so happily contrived that even mediocrity could work wonders by the use of it. It is also true that he overrated its coherence and its cogency. But this is a small matter. I do not believe that formal logic has ever made a reasoner nor inductive logic a discoverer. And however highly we rate Bacon as an inductive logician, and the forerunner of recent thinkers who have developed and perfected the inductive theory, it is not as the inventor of an investigating machine that Bacon lives in our grateful memory.

It is, however, quite as easy to underrate as to overrate Bacon's contribution to the theory of discovery. There are critics who suppose him guilty of believing that by the mere accumulation of

observed facts the secrets of Nature can be unlocked; that the exercise of the imagination without which you can no more make new science than you can make new poetry, is useless or dangerous, and that hypothesis is no legitimate aid to experimental investigation.

I believe these to be grave errors. I do not think that anybody who really tries to make out what Bacon meant by his Prerogative Instances and his Analogies will either deny that he believed in the unity of Nature, and in our power of coordinating its multitudinous details, or will suppose that he underrated the helps which the imagination, and only the imagination, can give to him who is absorbed in the great task.

I return from this digression on Baconian method to the larger question on which we were engaged. I called Bacon a seer. What, then, was it that he saw? What he saw in the first place were the evil results which followed on the disdainful refusal of philosophers to adopt the patient attitude which befits those who come to nature, to learn from her all that she has to teach. Bacon is never tired of telling us that the kingdom of nature, like the Kingdom of God, can only be entered by those who approach it in the spirit of a child. And there, surely, he was right. There, surely, his eloquence and his authority did much to correct the insolent

futility of those verbal disputants who thought they could impose upon nature their crude and hasty theories born of unsifted observations, interpreted by an unbridled fancy.

I do not mean to trouble you with many extracts. But there is one which so vividly represents Bacon, at least as I see him, that I believe you will thank me for reading it to you.

"Train yourselves," he says, "to understand the real subtlety of things, and you will learn to despise the fictitious and disputatious subtleties of words, and freeing yourselves from such follies, you will give yourselves to the task of facilitating—under the auspices of divine compassion—the lawful wedlock between the mind and nature. Be not like the empiric ant, which merely collects; nor like the cobweb-weaving theorists, who do but spin webs from their own intestines; but imitate the bees, which both collect and fashion. Against the 'Nought-beyond' and the ancients, raise your cry of 'More-beyond.' When they speak of the 'Not-imitable-thunderbolt' let us reply that the thunderbolt is imitable. Let the discovery of the new terrestrial world encourage you to expect the discovery of a new intellectual world. The fate of Alexander the Great will be ours. The conquests which his contemporaries thought marvellous, and likely to surpass the belief of posterity, were

described by later writers as nothing more than the natural successes of one who justly dared to despise imaginary perils. Even so, our triumph (for we shall triumph) will be lightly esteemed by those who come after us; justly, when they compare our trifling gains with theirs; unjustly, if they attribute our victory to audacity rather than to humility, and to freedom from that fatal human pride which has lost us everything, and has hallowed the fluttering fancies of men, in place of the imprint stamped upon things by the Divine seal."

There surely speaks the seer. There you have expressed in burning words the vehement faith which makes Bacon the passionate philosopher so singular a contrast to Bacon the cold and somewhat poor-spirited politician. There is the vision of man's conquest over nature, seen in its fullness by none before him, and not perhaps by many since. There is recognised with proud humility the little that one individual and one generation can accomplish, the splendour of the results which man's accumulated labours will secure.

It is no doubt easy to praise this ideal vulgarly, as it is easy to belittle it stupidly. It can be made to seem as if the Baconian ideal was to add something to the material conveniences of life, and to ignore the aspirations of the intellect. But this is a profound error. It is true that (to use his own

phrase) he looked with "pity on the estate of man." It is true that he saw in science a powerful instrument for raising it. But he put his trust in no petty device for attaining that great end. He had no faith in the chance harvests of empirical discovery. His was not an imagination that crawled upon the ground, that shrank from wide horizons, that could not look up to Heaven. He saw, as none had seen before, that if you would effectually subdue Nature to your ends, you must master her laws. You must laboriously climb to a knowledge of great principles before you can descend to their practical employment. There must be pure science before there is applied science. And though these may now appear truisms, in Bacon's time they were the intuitions of genius made long before the event. I should like to ask those more competent than myself to determine the period when this prophecy of Bacon began in any large measure to be accomplished. I believe myself it will be found that only recently, say within the last three or four generations, has industrial invention been greatly promoted by industrial research. Great discoveries were made by Bacon's contemporaries, by his immediate successors, and by men of science in every generation which has followed. But the effective application of pure knowledge to the augmentation of man's power over nature is of com-

paratively recent growth. You may find early examples here and there; but, broadly speaking, the effect which science has had and is now having, and in increasing measure is predestined to have, upon the fortunes of mankind, did not declare itself by unmistakable signs until a century and a half or two centuries had passed since the death of the great man who so eloquently proclaimed the approach of the new age.

You may say to me—Grant that all this is true, grant that Bacon, in Cowley's famous metaphor, looked from Pisgah over the Promised Land, but did not enter therein; or, in his own words, that he sounded the clarion, but joined not in the battle —what then? Did he do anything for science except make phrases about it? Are we after all so greatly in his debt? I answer that he created, or greatly helped to create, the atmosphere in which scientific discovery flourishes. If you consider how slightly science was in his day esteemed; if you remember the fears of the orthodox, the contempt of the learned, the indifference of the powerful, the ignorance of the many, you will perhaps agree that no greater work could be performed in its interest than that to which Bacon set his hand. "He entered not the promised land." True; but was it nothing to proclaim in the hearing of a generation wandering in the desert that there *is* a promised

land? "He joined not in the battle." True; but was it nothing to blow so loud a call that the notes of his clarion are still ringing in our ears? Let us not be ungrateful.

This is a theme on which much more could be said, but I am sure that this is not the time to say it. There was a magnificent compliment paid to Bacon's eloquence by Ben Jonson—a compliment so magnificent that, in my private conviction, neither Bacon nor any other speaker has ever deserved it. The poet alleges that the chief anxiety of those who heard the orator was lest his oratory should come to an end. This is not praise which in these degenerate days any of us are likely to deserve. But we need not rush into the other extreme: we need not compel our audience to forget all else in their desire that we should bring our discourse to a speedy conclusion. That trial, at all events, I hope to spare you. I will not therefore dwell, as I partly intended, on such tempting subjects as the criticisms passed on Bacon, and I may add, on Bacon's countrymen, by a great metaphysician of the last century. It may be enough to say that if Hegel thought little of Bacon, Bacon, had he known Hegel, would assuredly have returned the compliment. He would have regarded him as exhibiting the most perfect example of what he most detested in a thinker—the *intellectus sibi*

permissus. Assuredly these great men were not made to understand each other; though for us the very magnitude of their differences, by making them incomparable, may allow us (if we can) to admire both. However this may be, I shall have played my part if I have succeeded in showing reason why all who love science for its own sake, all who "looking with pity on the estate of man" believe that in science is to be found the most powerful engine for its material improvement, should join with this old and famous Society in doing honour to the greatest among its members.

PART ONE: SPECULATIVE

V: PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

V.

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH [1]

In accordance with precedent, I have to begin my observations to you by calling to your recollection the melancholy fact that since our last meeting we have lost a most distinguished member of our body—who by the lustre of his name added dignity to our proceedings, and who might, had his life been spared, have greatly promoted the success of our investigations—I allude to Professor Hertz. As those of you will know who have had the opportunity of following recent developments of physical science, he was the fortunate individual who demonstrated experimentally the identity of light and of certain electro-magnetic phenomena. This identity had been divined, and elaborated on the side of theory, by one of the greatest of British men of science, Clerk Maxwell, but the theory had never been verified until Professor Hertz, about five years ago, startled Europe by the experimental identification of these physical forces. The

[1] Presidential Address to the Society for Psychical Research, 1894.

extraordinary interest and the far-reaching importance of a discovery like this [1] will not perhaps be appreciated by every one of my audience, but all of those who take an interest in such subjects will see that by this stroke of genius a very large stride has been made towards establishing the unity of the great natural powers.

The mention of a physical discovery like this, made by one of ourselves, naturally suggests reflections as to our actual scientific position. What, we feel tempted to ask, do such results as we have arrived at bear to the general view which science has hitherto taken of that material universe in which we live? I must confess that, when I call to mind the history of these relations in the past, the record is not one on which at first sight we can dwell with any great satisfaction. Consider, for example, the attitude maintained by the great body of scientific opinion towards the phenomena which used to be known as mesmeric, but which have now been rebaptised, with Braid's term, hypnotic. As most of you are aware, it is little more than a century since the public attention of Europe was called to these extraordinary facts by the discoveries, or rediscoveries, of Mesmer. Mesmer produced hypnotic phenomena of a kind now familiar to everybody,

[1] Written, of course, before the modern development of wireless telegraphy.

and, not content with that, he invented a theory to account for them. The theory is an extremely bad one, and, I imagine, has fallen into the disrepute which it deserves; for Mesmer committed the error, not unfamiliar in the history of speculation—the error, I mean, of supposing that an effect has been explained when a name has been given to its unknown cause. He declared that there was a kind of magnetic fluid to the operations of which the results that he obtained were due; and he undoubtedly did his reputation much disservice in the minds of the scientific experts by associating his discoveries with fancies which neither at the time nor since could stand the test of critical investigation. Nevertheless, the facts that Mesmer brought forward could be proved in the last century, as they can be proved now, by experimental evidence of the most conclusive character. It could be shown that they are neither the result of deliberate fraud nor of unconscious deception; and, accordingly, there was here a problem presented for solution which it was plainly the duty of men of science to examine; to explain if they could, but under no circumstances to explain away. Their actual procedure was very different. There were, indeed, a good many doctors and other men of science who could not refuse the evidence of their senses, and who loudly testified to the truth,

the interest, and the importance of the phenomena which they witnessed. But if you take the body of opinion of men of science generally, you will be driven to the conclusion that they either denied facts which were obviously true, or that they thrust them aside without condescending to submit them to serious investigation. There were, I believe, no less than two or three Commissions of inquiry—three, I think—instituted in France alone, one in Mesmer's lifetime, and the other two, unless my memory deceives me, after his death. The evidence thus collected by some of the most eminent scientific men in France, should have been enough to call the attention of all Europe to the new problems thus raised. But it lay unnoticed or disbelieved until by a gradual process of rediscovery, by a constant and up-hill fight on the part of the less prejudiced members of the community, the truths of hypnotism, as far as they are yet attained, have reached something like general recognition. Even now, perhaps, their full importance—whether from a therapeutic or a psychological point of view—has not been sufficiently acknowledged.

Such, put very briefly, is the history of the relations between science and one small section of the alleged phenomena which fall outside the ordinary range of scientific investigation. If we

considered it by itself, we should be tempted to say that scientific men have shown in this connection a bigoted intolerance, a contemptuous indifference to scientific evidence, which, on the face of it, is wholly without excuse. I, however, do not feel inclined to acquiesce in so harsh a verdict. Hard as it may seem to justify their course, there was in it a great deal more of practical wisdom than might appear at first sight. I have always been impressed by a lesson which (as I think) is taught us by the general course of history, that you cannot expect, either of any single age or of any single nation or of any single profession, that it will carry out important original work simultaneously over the whole field open to its explorations. If they would march far, they must march on a narrow front. If they insist on diffusing their energies over too wide a surface, their labours will be barren. Now just consider what it is that men of science have done in the century which has elapsed since the first French Commission investigated Mesmer's discoveries. I do not believe it would be going too far to say that the whole body of the sciences, with the exception of mechanics, has been reconstructed from top to bottom. Our leading ideas in chemistry, our leading ideas in physics, the great generalisations connected with the conservation and dissipation of energy, the theories of light,

electricity, and sound, the whole of geology, every fruitful theory of organic evolution, were born in the hundred years which have elapsed since first Mesmer made hypnotic phenomena notorious through Europe. I think, if scientific men, taxed with their most unscientific treatment of this subject, choose to say that, in harmony with a certain general conception of the natural world, they were laying deep the foundations of the vast and imposing fabric of modern science, I for one should accept the plea as a bar to further proceedings. For the men who did that great work could scarcely have succeeded had they not rigidly confined themselves to one particular aspect of the universe with which they had to deal. Had they insisted on including in their survey not merely the well-travelled regions of everyday experience, but the dark and doubtful territories within which our labours lie, their work would have been worse, not better; less, not more, complete. They may have been narrow; but their narrowness has been our gain. They may have been prejudiced; but their prejudices have been fruitful, and we have reaped the harvest. When surveying the history of human speculation, we find some individual who has with more or less success anticipated the discoveries of a later age, but has neither himself been able to develop them nor yet to interest his con-

temporaries in their development, we are very apt to bestow on him an undue measure of gratitude. "Here," we say, "was a man before his time. Here was a man of whom his age was not worthy." Yet, in fact, he has done little to promote the growth of knowledge. There is no use in being before one's time after such a fashion as this. If neither he nor those to whom he spoke could make use of the message thus prematurely delivered, never understood and immediately forgotten, then, so far as science is concerned, he might without loss to the world have remained obstinately mute. To posterity he will be interesting, but hardly useful. He will earn their admiration, without otherwise deserving any large measure of their thanks.

This, however, is merely a parenthetical reflection, which, after all, has little to do with the general drift of the argument that I desire to lay before you. The question I wish you to consider is this: admitting that men of science had, if not a theoretical excuse, still a practical justification, for the course they have commonly adopted in regard to these obscure psychical phonemena, is that justification still valid? For myself, I think it is not. I think the time has now come when, in all our interests, the leaders of scientific thought should recognise that there are well-attested facts which cannot be any longer ignored merely because they

do not easily fit into the familiar framework of the sciences. They certainly call for explanation; and science, if true to itself, should examine them with an open mind.

I am, of course, aware that our experimental work is hampered by difficulties undreamed of in ordinary laboratories; they are of a kind unfamiliar to scientific men, and not unnaturally rouse in their minds both dislike and suspicion. To begin with, they must be on their guard against self-deception, and sometimes against fraud. The scientific man no doubt finds the path of ordinary experimental investigation strewn with obstacles, but at least he does not usually find among them the difficulty presented by moral frailty. He knows that, if he errs, it is the fault of the observer, not the fault of the observed. He knows that, if his interrogation of nature fails to elicit anything of interest, it is because he has failed in his cross-examination, not because nature, when put in the witness-box, tells untruths. But we of this Society are less happily situated. Deception, conscious or unconscious, makes observation doubly and trebly difficult, and throws obstacles in the way of the investigator which his happier brother working in the region of physical science has not to contend with.

And there is yet another difficulty in our path from which those who cultivate physical science

are happily free. They have, as the ultimate sources of their knowledge, the "five senses" which are the only generally recognised inlets through which the truths of external nature can penetrate into consciousness. But we have apparently to deal with cases in which not merely the normal senses, but some abnormal and half-completed sense, so to speak, comes into play; in which we have to collaborate with fellow-workers exceptionally organised, who can neither describe, account for, nor control, the unusual powers they appear to possess.

This is not only a source of perplexity and difficulty to ourselves; it is a stumbling-block to the scientific specialists whose aid we seek. There are many who think that, because we cannot repeat our experiments and verify our results *as* we will and *when* we will, the experiments are not worth making, and the results are little better than illusion. But this is, I venture to say, a very unphilosophic view of the subject. Is there, after all, any *a priori* improbability in there being these half-formed and imperfectly developed senses, or inlets of external information, occasionally and sporadically developed in certain members of the human race? Surely not. I should myself be disposed to say that, if our accepted views on development be really sound, phenomena like these, however strange, are

exactly what we should have expected. For what says the theory of natural selection? It tells us among other things that there have gradually been elaborated, by the extinction of the unfit and the survival of the fit, organisms possessed of senses adapted to further their success in the struggle for existence. To suppose that these senses should be in full correspondence with the whole of external nature, appears to me to be not only improbable, but, on any rational doctrine of probability, absolutely impossible. There must be countless forms of being, countless real existences, which, had the line of our evolution gone in a different direction, or had the necessities of our primitive ancestors been of a different kind, would have made themselves known to us through senses the very character of which we are at present unable to imagine. And, if this be so, is it not in itself likely that here and there we should come across rudimentary beginnings of such senses; beginnings never developed and probably never to be developed by the operation of selection; mere by-products of the great evolutionary machine, never destined to be turned to any useful account? And it may be—I am only hazarding an unverifiable guess—it may be, I say, that in the case of individuals thus abnormally endowed, we really have come across faculties which, had it been worth nature's while,

had they been of any value or purpose in the struggle for existence, might have been generally developed, and become the common possession of the whole human race. Had this occurred, we should have been enabled to experiment upon phenomena, which we now regard as occult and mysterious, with the same confidence in the sources of our information that we now enjoy in any of our ordinary inquiries into the laws of the material, or at least of the organic, world. If this be so, I do not think that men of science ought to show any excessive or distrustful impatience of the apparent irregularity which no doubt constitutes one of the most provoking characteristics of these abnormal phenomena.

But there is another difficulty, from the point of view of science, attaching to some apparent results of our investigations, which is not disposed of by the theory which I have just suggested. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that a certain proportion of the human race possess abnormal powers of perception in a very rudimentary form—it is evident that they may give rise to two kinds of experience. They may give us a kind of experience which shall be perfectly congruous with our existing conception of the physical universe, or they may give us one which harmonises with that conception imperfectly or not at all. As an example of the first I

might revert, by way of illustration, to the discovery, previously referred to, of Professor Hertz. He, as I have already reminded you, has experimentally proved that ordinary light is a case of electro-magnetic radiation. Light consists, as you all know, of undulations of what is known as the luminiferous ether; electro-magnetic waves are also undulations of the same ether, differing from the undulations which we call light only in their length. Now, it is easy to conceive that we might have a sense which would enable us to perceive the long undulations in the same way as we now perceive the short ones. That would be a new sense, but, though new, its deliverances would, without the least difficulty, have fitted in with the existing notions which scientific men have framed of the universe. But, unfortunately, in our special investigations we seem to come across experiences which are not so amenable. We apparently get hints of occurrences which, if they be well established, as they appear to be, cannot, so far as I can judge, by any amount of manipulation, be squeezed into the accepted pattern of the natural world; and if that be so, then we are indeed engaged in a work of prodigious difficulty, but of an importance of which the difficulty is the measure and the proof. For we should then be actually on the threshold of a region ordered according to laws which are not merely unknown,

but which to all appearance have little congruity with those which govern the regions already within our ken.

Let me dwell on this point a little more, as it is one of central interest to all who are engaged in our special investigations. What I am asserting is that the facts which we come across are very *odd* facts. I do not mean merely queer and unexpected: I mean "odd" in the sense that they are out of harmony with the accepted theories. They may or may not be strange and striking; but they are "odd" in the sense that whether dull or dramatic they seem to jar with the views which men of science and men of common sense generally entertain about the universe in which we live.

In order to illustrate this distinction, I will take two very simple instances. I suppose everybody would say that it would be an extraordinary circumstance if our earth, on its journey through space, were suddenly to perish by collision with some unknown body travelling across our path. Yet, though such an event would be dramatic and terrible, it is, after all, one of which no astronomer would assert the impossibility. He would say, I suppose, that it was most unlikely, but that, if it occurred, it would involve no change in astronomical theory. Our globe, with the rest of the solar system, is hurrying, I do not know how many miles

a second, in the direction of the constellation Hercules. There is no *a priori* ground for supposing that in the course of this mysterious journey, of whose cause we are absolutely ignorant, we may not come across some wanderer in interstellar space which will produce the uncomfortable results which I have ventured to indicate. Indeed, during the last two hundred years, astronomers have themselves been witness to stellar tragedies of incomparably greater magnitude than that which would be produced by the destruction of so petty a planet as the one which we happen to inhabit. We have seen stars which shine from incalculable distances, and are of unknown magnitude, burst into sudden conflagration, blaze for a time with portentous brightness, and then slowly sink into obscurity. What that phenomenon precisely indicates we cannot say, but it certainly suggests a catastrophe far more tremendous than the sudden destruction of our particular world, which to us would, doubtless, seem sufficiently startling.

This, then, is a specimen of an event which, however strange, easily harmonises with our existing scientific conceptions. Contrast with this a class of (alleged) occurrences which at first sight, and to many observers, may appear commonplace and familiar, but which falls altogether outside ordinary scientific explanation. I have constantly met

people who tell you, with no apparent consciousness of saying anything more out of the way than a remark about the weather, that by the exercise of their will they can make anybody at a little distance turn round and look at them. Now such a fact (if fact it be) is far more scientifically extraordinary than would be the destruction of this globe by some such celestial catastrophe as the one I have imagined; and greatly mistaken are they who think that this exercise of "will power," as they call it, is the most natural thing in the world, something that everybody would have anticipated, something which hardly deserves scientific notice or requires scientific explanation. In reality it is a profound mystery if it be true, and no event, however startling, which can be shown to fit naturally into the structure of the physical sciences should excite half so much intellectual curiosity as this trifling and seemingly commonplace phenomenon.

Now, most of the persons who suppose themselves to be endowed with this so-called will power are, I should imagine, the dupes of a too credulous fancy. But putting their testimony on one side, there remains a vast mass of evidence in favour of what we now call telepathy; and to telepathy the observations I have been making do in my opinion most strictly apply. For, consider! In every case of telepathy you have an example of action at a

distance. Examples of real or apparent action at a distance are, of course, very common. Gravitation is such an example. We have not yet discovered any mechanism, if I may use the phrase, which can transmit gravitational influence from one body to another. Nevertheless, scientific men do not rest content with that view. I recollect it used to be maintained by the late Mr. John Mill that there was no ground for regarding with any special wonder the phenomenon of action at a distance. He may have been right, but I do not think you will find a first-rate physicist who is prepared to admit that gravity calls for no explanation. He is not ready, in other words, to accept action at a distance as an ultimate fact, though he has not as yet found any clue to the real nature of the links by which the attracting bodies act and react upon one another.

But though gravitation and telepathy are alike in this, that we are quite ignorant of the means by which in either case distant entities influence one another, it would be a great mistake to suppose that the two modes of operation are equally mysterious. In the case of telepathy, there is not merely the difficulty which it shares with gravitation, the difficulty, I mean, of conjecturing the nature of the mechanism which operates between the agent and the patient, between the man who influences and

the man who is influenced; but what happens seems quite out of harmony with any of our accepted ideas as to the mode in which force ordinarily acts through space unoccupied by matter. Is this telepathic action a simple case of action from a centre of disturbance? Is it like the light of the sun, radiating equally in every direction? If it is, we should expect it to behave like other forces of the same kind. It ought, as it were, to get beaten out thinner and thinner the further it is removed from its original source—its effects diminishing with the distance, while showing themselves equally in all directions. But there is no evidence whatever that diffusion of this kind actually takes place. There is no indication of any disturbance equal at equal distances from its point of origin, and diminishing as the distance increases according to some assignable law. Nothing like radiation appears to be in question.

But if we are to reject this idea, which is the first that ordinary analogies would suggest, what are we to put in its place? Are we to suppose that there is some means by which telepathic energy can be directed through space from mind to mind by some selective agency? If we are to believe this, we are face to face not only with a fact extraordinary in itself, but with a kind of fact which does not fit in with anything we know at present in the region

either of physics or of physiology. It is true, no doubt, that we do know plenty of cases where energy is directed like water in a pipe, like an electric current in a wire, like a bullet from a rifle. But, then, in such cases there is always some material cause of this selective action. Is there any such material cause in the case of telepathy? There is no sign of it. We cannot form any notion of its character; and yet, if we are to draw the obvious conclusion from the facts observed, some selective guidance, material or immaterial, there must certainly be.

Here, then, we are face to face with a phenomenon which is not less surprising from a scientific point of view because it has no great spectacular interest. Anyone who endeavours to wade through the mass of evidence collected by our Society on the subject will soon discover that it makes small appeal to our appetite for the dramatic, that it is often dull, and sometimes tedious. Dr. Johnson, if I rightly remember, once observed that the man who went to the novels of Richardson for the story had better hang himself. So with equal reason might we speak of the man who seeks, in the records of psychical research, the thrill of supernatural mystery which we justly demand from a well-written ghost story. It must be owned that, on the whole, our records make indifferent "copy."

Yet sometimes, when they are least entertaining from the point of view of literature, they are most suggestive from the point of view of science; and science, be it remembered, is our first interest.

Yet not, I freely admit, our only one. All arbitrary limitations of our sphere of work are to be avoided. To record, to investigate, to classify, and, if possible, to explain, facts of a far more startling and impressive character than these seemingly simple cases of telepathy is part of our business. Let us not neglect it. And if many are animated by a wish to get evidence, not through any process of metaphysical deduction, but by observation and experiment, that conscious beings exist unhelped and unhampered by organisms like our own, I see nothing in their action to criticise, much less to condemn. But while there is sufficient evidence, in my judgment, to justify all the labours of our Society in this inviting field of research, it is not the field of research which lies closest to the ordinary subjects of scientific study. Therefore it is that, on an occasion when I specially desired to arrest the attention, and if possible to engage the interest, of men of science, I content myself with pointing to the definite and very simple experiments which, simple as they are, yet hint at conclusions not easily reconciled with our customary views of the physical world. If these experiments have been repeated

under tests sufficiently crucial to prove that there is here something to be explained, all interested in science will ultimately be driven willingly or unwillingly to join us in the task of unravelling the tangled problems with which this Society is endeavouring to deal. With what success such efforts will be crowned I know not. I have already indicated to you, at the beginning of my remarks, the special class of difficulties which besets our path. We are not endowed with the appropriate physical senses, we are ill supplied with appropriate subjects for experiment, we are hampered and embarrassed at every turn by credulity, fraud, and prejudice. Nevertheless, if I rightly interpret the conclusions which many years of labour have forced upon our members, and upon others not among our number who are moved by a like spirit of inquiry, it does seem that outside the world of nature, as we, from the point of science, have been in the habit of conceiving it, there does lie a region in whose twilight some experimental knowledge may laboriously be gleaned; and even if we cannot entertain any confident hope of discovering what laws its dim and shadowy phenomena obey, at all events it will be some gain to have shown, not as a matter of speculation or conjecture, but as a matter of ascertained fact, that there are things in heaven and

earth not hitherto dreamed of in naturalistic philosophy.

Note

This address was delivered more than a quarter of a century ago. Much has happened since then; our views on the constitution of matter have been revolutionised, and though I believe the general argument to be, broadly speaking, sound and relevant to present-day issues, I should not now dogmatise quite so confidently as to what men of science think about gravitation, the ether, and action at a distance.

PART TWO: POLITICAL

VI: ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS

VI

ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS[1]

You have invited me, partly as a politician, partly as a philosopher, to say something for German readers upon Anglo-German relations. I fear that philosophers have little to say about the question, and that politicians may easily say too much; it is therefore with great misgiving that I comply with your invitation. I may perhaps do harm; I cannot think it likely that I shall do much good. But, as you appeal to me, I will make the attempt.

Let me at once say that I do not propose to adopt the attitude either of a judge or of a critic. I may be able to explain, I may be able to diminish misunderstanding. I am by no means confident that I shall succeed, but it is the only attempt worth making. If I can present the English point of view clearly and without offence to your readers, it may do something, however slight, to mitigate existing

[1] This article, written for German readers, was contributed at the request of its editor to *Nord und Süd*, a well-known German periodical, two years before the outbreak of war, in June, 1912.

evils in so far as these are due to want of mutual comprehension.

I use the phrase "English point of view" without hesitation; for I believe that in this matter there is only one English point of view. I do not of course mean that every statement I am going to make is consciously accepted by every Englishman, nor if it be accepted that all Englishmen hold it with equal conviction. But I do mean that, in a very real sense, the deep uneasiness with which the people of this country contemplate possible developments of German policy, throws its shadows across the whole country, irrespective of party or of creed.

Why is this? It cannot be attributed to prejudices rooted in an historic past. The German nation has never been our enemy. In the long series of wars in which Britain was involved between the Revolution of 1688 and the Peace of 1815, we always had German States as our allies; and few have been the continental battles where English soldiers have fought in which no German soldier was fighting in the same cause.

Nor are Englishmen unmindful of their share in the great debt which all the world owes to German genius and German learning. For some two hundred years Germany has been as clearly first in the art of music as ever Italy was in the art of painting. She has been the great pioneer in

modern classical philology, in modern criticism, in modern historical research, in the science of language, in the comparative study of religions. Indeed, she has been much more than merely a pioneer. She has not only shown how the work should be done, but she has willingly taken upon herself by far the largest share of the labour involved in doing it, and has harvested, as was just, by far the largest share of successful achievement.

In the domain of the natural sciences the story is indeed less one-sided. We in Britain need not be ashamed of the roll of great men who have contributed to the scientific developments which have made the last hundred years illustrious. But how admirable, both in quality and quantity, has been the German work in these departments! How perfect is their organisation for research! How fruitful in discovery!

And what shall I say of German philosophy? It was of this in particular that you desired me to speak, but in truth I am not qualified to say anything but what is known and acknowledged throughout all countries. Though my small philosophic barque attempts its explorations in shallower waters, I admire the mighty stream of European speculation, flowing since Leibniz mainly in German channels, which has done so much to supply the world with a spiritual philosophy. At this

moment, as I suppose, four out of every five occupants of philosophic chairs in countries speaking the language of Locke, of Berkeley, and of Hume, draw from German sources both the substance of their teaching and its inspiration. This surely is a great thing to say; for though philosophers be few in both nations, we must surely hope that their importance is not measured simply by their numbers.

If, therefore, recent years have produced a change in the way in which ordinary Englishmen judge of German policy, it is due to no national prejudice, to no under-estimate of German worth, to no want of gratitude for German services in the cause of universal culture. To what then is it due? I reply that, so far as I can judge, it is due to the interpretation which they have thought themselves obliged to place upon a series of facts, or supposed facts, each of which taken by itself might be of small moment, but which taken together can neither be lightly treated nor calmly ignored.

The first of these facts (the first at least to be realised) was the German Navy Bill and its results. No Englishman denies the right of every country to settle the character and magnitude of its own armaments; and there has been, I believe, no eagerness to detect in the German naval policy any intentions hostile to this country. But on such a point British opinion is sensitive, and must be sen-

sitive, for reasons which are commonplaces here, but are, I think, imperfectly understood by many Germans who, in general, are friendly to this country. Let me briefly indicate their character.

If Englishmen were sure that a German fleet was only going to be used for defensive purposes—i.e. against aggression—they would not care how large it was; for a war of aggression against Germany is to them unthinkable. There are, I am told, many Germans who would strongly dissent from this statement. Yet it is no paradox. Putting on one side all considerations based on public morality, it must be remembered, in the first place, that we are a commercial nation; and war, whatever its issue, is ruinous to commerce and to the credit on which commerce depends. It must be remembered, in the second place, that we are a political nation; and an unprovoked war would shatter in a day the most powerful Government and the most united party. It must be remembered, in the third place, that we are an insular nation, wholly dependent on sea-borne supplies, possessing no considerable army either for home defence or foreign service, and compelled, therefore, to play for very unequal stakes should Germany be our opponent in the hazardous game of war.

It is this last consideration which I would earnestly ask enlightened Germans to weigh well if

they would understand the British point of view. It can be made clear in a very few sentences: There are two ways in which a hostile country can be crushed. It can be conquered, or it can be starved. If Germany were master in our home waters, she could apply both methods to Britain. Were Britain ten times master in the North Sea, she could apply neither method to Germany. Without a superior fleet, Britain would no longer count as a Power. Without any fleet at all, Germany would remain the greatest Power in Europe.

It is therefore the mere instinct of self-preservation which obliges Englishmen not merely to take account of the growth in foreign navies, but anxiously to weigh the motives of those who build them. If they are built solely for purposes of defence, Britain would not, indeed, be thereby relieved of the duty of maintaining the standard of relative strength required for national safety; but she would have no ground for disquiet, still less for ill-will. But does Germany make it easy for Britain to take this view? The external facts of the situation appear to be as follows: the greatest military Power and the second greatest naval Power in the world is adding both to her army and to her navy. She is increasing the strategic railways which lead to frontier states—not merely to frontier states which themselves possess powerful

armies, but to small states which can have no desire but to remain neutral if their formidable neighbours should unhappily become belligerents. She is in like manner modifying her naval arrangements so as to make her naval strength instantly effective. It is conceivable that all this may be only in order to render herself impregnable against attack. Such an object would certainly be commendable, though the efforts undergone to secure it might (to outside observers) seem in excess of any possible danger. If all nations could be made impregnable to the same extent, peace would doubtless be costly, but at least it would be secure. Unfortunately, no mere analysis of the German preparations for war will show for what purposes they are designed. A tremendous weapon has been forged; every year adds something to its efficiency and power; it is as formidable for purposes of aggression as for purposes of defence. But to what end it was originally designed, and in what cause it will ultimately be used, can only be determined, if determined at all, by extraneous considerations.

I here approach the most difficult and delicate part of my task. Let me preface it by saying that ordinary Englishmen do not believe, and certainly I do not believe, either that the great body of the German people wish to make an attack on their

neighbours, or that the German Government intends it. A war in which the armed manhood of half Europe would take part can be no object of deliberate desire either for nations or for statesmen. The danger lies elsewhere. It lies in the co-existence of that marvellous instrument of warfare, the German army and navy, with the assiduous, I had almost said the organised, advocacy of a policy which it seems impossible to reconcile with the peace of the world or the rights of nations. For those who accept this policy German development means German territorial expansion. All countries which hinder, though it be only in self-defence, the realisation of this ideal, are regarded as hostile; and war, or the threat of war, is deemed the natural and fitting method by which the ideal itself is to be accomplished.

Now it is no part of my intention to criticise such theories. My business is to explain the views which are held in Britain, not to condemn those which are preached in Germany. Let German students, if they will, redraw the map of Europe in harmony with what they conceive to be the present distribution of the Germanic race; let them regard the German Empire of the twentieth century as the heir-at-law of all territories included in the Holy Roman Empire of the twelfth; let them assume that Germany should be endowed at the cost of

other nations with overseas dominions proportionate to her greatness in Europe. But do not let them ask Englishmen to approve. We have had too bitter an experience of the ills which flow from the endeavour of any single state to dominate Europe; we are too surely convinced of the perils which such a policy, were it successful, would bring upon ourselves, as well as upon others, to treat them as negligible. Negligible surely they are not. In periods of international calm they always made for increasing armaments; in periods of international friction they aggravate the difficulties of diplomacy. This is bad; but it is not the worst. Their effects, as it seems to us, go deeper. To them is due the conviction, widely held, I am afraid, by many Germans, that Britain stands in their country's light, that Englishmen desire to thwart her natural development, are jealous of her most legitimate growth. Of these crimes we are quite unconscious; but surely it is no slight evil that they should be so readily believed. If ever, by some unhappy fate, it became an accepted article of faith in either nation that Germany and Britain were predestined enemies, that the ambitions of the one and the security of the other were irreconcilably opposed, the predictions of those prophets (and they abound in the Chancelleries of Europe) who regard a conflict between them as inevitable, would

be already half-fulfilled. But for myself I am no believer in such predestination. Germany has taught Europe much; she can teach it yet more. She can teach it that organised military power may be used in the interests of peace as effectually as in those of war; that the appetite for domination belongs to an outworn phase of patriotism; that the furtherance of civilisation, for which she has so greatly laboured, must be the joint work of many peoples; and that the task for none of them is lightened by the tremendous burden of modern armaments, or the perpetual preoccupation of national self-defence. If on these lines she is prepared to lead, she will find a world already prepared to follow—prepared in no small measure by what she has herself accomplished in the highest realms of science and speculation. But if there be signs that her desires point to other objects, and that her policy is moulded by ambitions of a different type, can it be a matter of surprise that other countries watch the steady growth of her powers of aggression with undisguised alarm, and anxiously consider schemes for meeting what they are driven to regard as a common danger?

PART TWO: POLITICAL

VII: A GERMAN'S VIEW OF GERMAN WORLD-POLICY AND WAR

VII

A GERMAN'S VIEW OF GERMAN WORLD-POLICY AND WAR [1]

UNTIL the late Professor Cramb published his *Germany and England,* Treitschke was scarcely even a name to the British public. Even now his name is much better known than his books. This is partly due to the fact that his main work was an unfinished history of modern Germany, and that much of this dealt with the period which began with the peace of 1815 and ended with the Bismarckian era—a period rich in scientific, philosophical, and musical achievement, but politically barren and, to the foreigner, dull. It is also due to the fact that the full significance of the political theories to which his lectures were devoted has only recently been made plain. Political theories, from those of Aristotle downwards, have ever been related, either by harmony or contrast, to the political practice of their day; but of no theories is this more glaringly true than of those expounded in these

[1] Introduction to the English translation (Heinrich von Treitschke's Lectures on "Politics") by Blanche Dugdale and Torben de Bille, published in 1916.

volumes. They could not have been written before 1870. Nothing quite like them will be written after 1917. They bear somewhat the same relation to Bismarck as Machiavelli's Prince bears to Cæsar Borgia—though no one would put Treitschke on a level with Machiavelli, or Borgia on a level with Bismarck.

Their author, born in 1834, and twenty-seven years old when William I became King of Prussia, with Bismarck as his Minister, is thus qualified by age to represent the generation which, in its youth, sought in "Liberal principles" the means of furthering its national ideals; found them utterly impotent and ineffectual; and welcomed with patriotic fervour the Bismarckian policy of "blood and iron."

It is permissible to conjecture that if the political creed of Treitschke's youth had borne the practical fruit which he so passionately desired, the subsequent history of the world would have been wholly different. If "liberalism," in the continental sense,[1] had given Germany empire and power,

[1] It is hardly necessary to observe that I use the words "Liberal principles" and "Liberalism" in their continental, not in their British, meaning. We borrowed them from abroad, and have used them to designate party, or, rather, a particular section of a particular party. But "Liberalism" as used in its original home is a name for principles of constitutional liberty and representative government, which have long been the common property of all parties throughout the English-speaking portions of the world.

militarism would never have grown to its present exorbitant proportions. The greatest tragedy of modern times is that she owes her unity and her greatness not to the free play of public opinion acting through constitutional machinery, but to the unscrupulous genius of one great man, who found in the Prussian monarchy, and the Prussian military system, fitting instruments for securing German ideals.

The main interest, then, of these lectures to me, and perhaps to others, lies in the fact that they represent the mature thought of a vigorous personality, who, in early manhood, saw the war with Denmark, the war with Austria, and the war with France, create, in violation of all "Liberal" principles, that German Empire for which German Liberals had vainly striven. War, it was evident, could be both glorious and cheap; absolute monarchy had shown itself the only effective instrument for national self-realisation; a diplomatic and military policy, carried through in defiance of public opinion, had performed in a few months what generations of debaters had been unable to accomplish.

It is useless, of course, to look for impartiality in political speculations born under such conditions. Forty or fifty years ago the ordinary British reader sought in German historical research a ref-

uge from the party bias so common among British historians. Hume, Lingard, Alison, Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude, Freeman—all in their several ways looked at their selected periods through glasses coloured by their own political or theological predilections. Mitford and Grote carried their modern prejudices into their pictures of classical antiquity. But the German historian, though his true course might perhaps be deflected by some over-ingenious speculation, was free (we supposed) from these cruder and more human sources of error. He might be dull, but he was at least fair. With the development of German unity, however, German impartiality vanished. To Ranke succeeded Von Sybel and Mommsen. Political detachment could no longer be looked for; learning was yoked to politics; and history was written with a purpose. In no one does this patriotic prejudice produce more curious results than in Treitschke. His loves and his hates, his hopes and his fears, his praise and his blame, his philosophic theories, his practical suggestions—all draw their life from the conviction that German greatness was due to her military system, that her military system was the creation of Prussia, and that Prussia was the creation of Hohenzollern absolutism.

Consider, for example, his abstract theory of

the state which colours all his more important political speculation. An English writer who wished to set forth his views on education, local government, military organisation, and so forth, might perhaps regard an abstract theory of the state as a superfluous luxury. But then, as Treitschke explains in another connection, the English are "shallow" and the Germans "profound," so that this difference of treatment was to be expected; and certainly the English reader has no ground for regretting it. For though the theory itself is neither very original nor very coherent; though its appeals to history are unconvincing; yet its popularity in the country of its birth gives the key to contemporary history. It explains and justifies modern Germany. The State, says Trietschke, is Power. Of so unusual a type is its power that it has no power to limit its power. Hence no treaty, when it becomes inconvenient, can be binding; hence the very notion of general arbitration is absurd; hence war is part of the Divine order. Small states must be contemptible because they must be weak; success is the test of merit, power is its reward; and all nations get what they deserve.

A theory of politics entirely governed by patriotic passion is not likely to be either very impartial or very profound. Even the most dexterous literary treatment could hardly hide its in-

herent narrowness. But Trietschke, to do him justice, attempts no disguises. He airs his prejudices with a *naïveté* truly amazing. I will not say that he wanted humour. Many things struck him as exquisitely comic—small states, for example, and the Dutch language. He occasionally enlivened his lectures, we are told, by a satirical imitation of a British "hurrah." He clearly, therefore, possessed his own sense of fun, yet he remained sadly lacking in that prophylactic humour which protects its possessor against certain forms of extravagance and absurdity.

In nothing does this come out more clearly than in his excessive laudation of his own countrymen, and his not less excessive depreciation of everybody else. Partly no doubt this was done for a purpose. He had formed the opinion, rather surprising to a foreigner, that the Germans, as a nation, are unduly diffident—always in danger of "enervating their nationality through possessing too little rugged national pride." [1] It must be owned that very little of this weakness is likely to remain in any German who takes Trietschke seriously. Nevertheless, it should have been possible to explain to the German people how much better they are than the rest of the world without pouring crude abuse upon every other nation. If the German be indeed

[1] I. 19-20.

deficient in "rugged pride," by all means tell him what a fine fellow he really is. But why spoil the compliment by lowering the standard of comparison? It may, for example, be judicious to encourage the too diffident Prussians by assuring them that they "are by their character more reasonable and more free than Frenchmen." [1] But when the Prussian reader discovers that in Treitschke's opinion the French are excessively unreasonable and quite incapable of freedom, the effect is marred. If, again, it be needful to remind the Germans of their peculiar sensibility to the beauties of nature, is it necessary to emphasise their superiority by explaining that when resting in a forest they lie upon their backs, while the Latin races, less happily endowed, repose upon their stomachs? [2]

Inordinate self-esteem may be a very agreeable quality. Those who possess it are often endowed with an imperturbable complacency which softens social intercourse, and is not inconsistent with some kindly feeling towards those whom they deem to be their inferiors. But it must be acknowledged that with Treitschke this quality does not appear in its most agreeable form. With him it is censorious and full of suspicion. Unlike charity it greatly vaunteth itself; unlike charity it thinketh all evil.

[1] I. 66. [2] I. 206.

Rare indeed are the references to other nations which do not hold them up to hatred or contempt. America, France, Austria, Spain, Russia, Britain are in turn required to supply the sombre background against which the virtues of Germany shine forth with peculiar lustre. The Dutch, we are told, have "deteriorated morally and physically." [1] Americans are mere money-grabbers. The Russians are barbarians. The Latin races are degenerate. The English have lost such poor virtues as they once possessed; while their "want of chivalry" shocks the "simple fidelity of the German nature." [2] Cannot the subjects of the Kaiser realise "the simple fidelity of their German nature" without being reminded how forcibly that "simple fidelity" is impressed by "the want of chivalry in the English character"? We need not quarrel over these opinions. They are made by a German for Germans, and doubtless they suit their market. But, when Treitschke allows his statements of fact and his moral judgment to be violently distorted by national prejudice, his errors become more serious.

I do not here refer to his wider generalisations, though I often disagree with them. I think, for example, that he exaggerates the absorption of the individual by the community in the city states of

[1] I. 50. [2] II. 395.

antiquity; and his classification of various forms of government has not much to recommend it. On such questions, however, judgments may easily differ. But what are we to say of the misstatements of bare historical fact in which he indulges without scruple? Some of these, no doubt, are mere slips, as, for example, when he places the activities of Titus Oates in the reign of James II;[1] others are unimportant exhibitions of ignorance, as when he assures his readers that in England there are no Crown lands;[2] others, again, are mere exercises of the imagination, as when he tells us that, "after Henry VIII's hymeneal prodigies, it was enacted by Parliament that its assent was necessary to the validity of any Royal marriage."[3]

These blunders are presumably due to want of memory or want of care. But others are the offspring of invincible prejudice. When he tells us that England "turns a deaf ear on principle to generous ideas,"[4] the judgment may to an Englishman appear absurd, and, in the mouth of a German, even impudent. Yet it must to a certain extent be a matter of opinion. Character cannot be tested in retorts or weighed in balances. But what excuse can there be for such a particular historical statement as that "England's first thought

[1] II. 473. [2] II. 490. [3] II. 165. [4] II. 614.

in abolishing slavery was the destruction of colonial competition?"[1] There was not, and there could not be, any possible competition between British manufacturers and the producers of slave-grown sugar. The charge is not merely false, it is foolish.

Again, there is something peculiarly absurd in the statement that "no sooner had the French Revolution broken out than Pitt eagerly began to urge a reform of the franchise."[2] This is not merely a misstatement of fact. It is a misstatement of fact which shows an utter want of comprehension of English political history at the period referred to. There is no reason why even a Professor of Modern History at the University of Berlin should know the details of Pitt's abortive efforts at parliamentary reform; but he ought to know enough of the subject to prevent him mistaking the whole significance of the facts to which he refers. Treitschke's blunder is not simply one of chronology; it shows complete misapprehension of the true relations between the French Revolution and English constitutional development. So far from the outbreak of the French Revolution having inspired Pitt to attempt parliamentary reform, it put a sudden and violent stop to a repetition of the efforts he had already made. In other

[1] I. 162. [2] II. 157.

countries the spirit of the French Revolution may have stimulated political development. In Britain its excesses killed political development for a generation.

One more example of Treitschke's extraordinary carelessness I will give, because it illustrates his shortcomings as a student of comparative politics. He is drawing a parallel between the German and the British methods of settling the relations between executive authority and the rights of individual citizens. He acknowledges that in Germany magistrates and police possess powers far in excess of those possessed by the corresponding authorities in Britain; he acknowledges that these powers may be abused. But this, he argues, is the lesser of two evils. The British system would, in his judgment, be quite unworkable if it could not be immediately suspended in case of emergency. England, he tells his hearers, is continually proclaiming martial law; according to him no year passes without the Riot Act being read [1]; and when the Riot Act is read he supposes the whole machinery of ordinary law to be put out of gear. This, it need hardly be observed, is nonsense from beginning to end. Martial law is never proclaimed; many years pass without the Riot Act being read; and when the Riot Act is

[1] I. 157.

read, the machinery of law is neither stopped nor in the slightest degree interfered with. [1]

Abuse of Britain, Holland, and America, contemptuous references to the Latin nations, extravagant laudations of everything German (except indeed the small courts of Germany), still more extravagant laudations of everything Prussian, and particularly the Prussian monarchy, are but the setting intended to throw into high relief his own national ideals. We are all familiar with the stock character in fiction of the *nouveau riche,* who is at once justly proud of having made his own fortune, and bitterly contemptuous of those who have inherited theirs. They are, in his eyes, weak, degenerate, and incompetent, unworthy of the fortunes which ancestral energy, or ancestral luck, has conferred upon them. But in the very midst of his envious indignation, he cannot shake off the ambition to follow in their steps; he must imitate those whom he affects to despise.

I do not know whether there is anything in real life corresponding to this fancy picture; but in the commonwealth of nations the part is aptly played by the German Empire as Treitschke saw it. Consider, for example, his views on colonisation. It is

[1] This introduction is by no means intended as a Review of Treitschke's lectures, and this list of inaccuracies, drawn entirely from Treitschke's references to England, has no pretensions to be complete.

not easy to see why colonial possessions appeal so strongly to his imagination; for he dislikes new countries almost more than he dislikes every old country except Germany. The notion, for example, that the culture of the new world can ever rival the culture of the old seems to him absurd. He observes, though not in these lectures, that a German who goes to the United States is "lost to civilisation"—an amiable sentiment which seems hardly consistent with the passion for acquiring new countries. But the real reason for these ambitions becomes plain on further examination. While Germany was in the throes of the Thirty Years' War, or slowly recovering from its effects, England, the detested rival, was laying the foundations of the English-speaking communities beyond the seas; and while Frederick the Great was robbing his neighbours, and his successors were struggling with the forces let loose by the French Revolution, the hold of English-speaking peoples upon regions outside Europe increased and strengthened.

This was quite enough for Treitschke. What Britain had must be worth having. If there was something worth having and Germany had it not, this must be due to the bad luck which sometimes pursues even the most deserving. If Germany had it not and England had it, this must be due to the good luck which sometimes befalls even the most

incompetent. But such inequalities are not to be tolerated. They must be redressed, if need be by force. The "outcome" (he tells us) "of our next successful war must be the acquisition of colonies by any possible means." [1]

It would seem, however, that Treitschke was dimly aware that even to a German audience such a doctrine might seem a trifle cynical. He therefore advances a subtler motive for these colonial ambitions. Germany, he tells us, should bear a part in the improvement of inferior races. She should become a pioneer of civilisation in savage lands. To outside observers, indeed, it does not appear that either the practice of his countrymen, or his own theories, suggest that Germany has any particular qualifications for this missionary enterprise. What is likely to be the fate of coloured races under German domination, when men like Treitschke frankly avow that "in Livonia and Kurland there is no other course open to us (the Germans) but to keep the subject races in as uncivilised a condition as possible, and thus prevent them becoming a danger to the handful of their conquerors." [2]

Here we come back to the fundamental thought of Treitschke—the State as Will to Power, and to his patriotic corollary that a Prussianised Ger-

[1] I. 119. [2] I. 122.

many under a Hohenzollern dynasty should enable that thought to be realised. In supporting this view there is no extravagance, historical, or moral, from which he shrinks. He tells us, for example, that Frederick the Great was the "greatest King who ever reigned on earth." [1] He accordingly finds in him the most unexpected virtues. Frederick's dominating motive towards the end of his life was, it seems, "the desire to execute ideal justice." [2] A noble desire truly; but surely not one which should expect to find much satisfaction in the partition of Poland. Do you ask the reason for this extravagance of laudation? The answer is that Frederick was the greatest of the Hohenzollerns, that the Hohenzollerns created the Prussian State and the Prussian Army, that the Prussian State and the Prussian Army created Germany. Treitschke positively gloats over Prussian supremacy. "The will of the German Empire," he observes, "must in the last resort be the will of Prussia." [3] All small states are ridiculous, but the most ridiculous of small states are the Kingdoms of Bavaria, Saxony, and Würtemberg. "The German army, not the German parliament, is in Germany the real and effective bond of national union." [4] And the German army is a Prussian creation.

He does not, of course, pretend that a Hohen-

[1] II. 68. [2] II. 69. [3] II. 375. [4] II. 390.

zollern can do no wrong. He goes the length, indeed, of accusing one of them, Frederick William IV, of "deadly crime." [1] And what was this deadly crime? It was that after sending in troops to assist the Kings of Bavaria and Saxony to restore order, he withdrew them without destroying the independence of the states he had gone to protect. He behaved like a gentleman, but he sinned against the law of force.

But in spite of this lapse from patriotic virtue, and notwithstanding that it is difficult to say much in favour of any of Frederick the Great's successors until we come to William I, Treitschke holds firmly to the belief that the Prussian monarchy is a thing apart, and that Hohenzollern royalty is not as other royalties. Sometimes, indeed, this sentiment shows itself in a somewhat ludicrous fashion. For example, Treitschke, in the course of these lectures, vigorously defends the use of classical studies in the education of youth. There is no way, according to him, in which intellect and taste can be more successfully developed than by a thorough study of Greek and Latin.[2] So far, so good. But a little further on the lecturer has to deal—not with the education of ordinary mankind, but—with that of a German prince, and we find to our surprise that in the case of a German prince a classical edu-

[1] I. 95. [2] I. 375.

cation has no merits. He must learn French and English. Why should he do more? "Why on earth should he be bothered with Latin, let alone Greek?" [1] We rub our eyes and ask what this outburst can mean. Are "intellect and taste" of no value to a German prince? Or is a German prince privileged by the grace of God to acquire them without education, or by an education inapplicable to the common herd? We may be sure that none of these alternatives represent Treitschke's considered views. I hazard another guess. I suggest that the lecturer must have known some young Hohenzollern prince well acquainted with French and English, but quite innocent of Latin and Greek!

From these brief criticisms the reader will be able to form some conjecture as to what he may expect to find in the following pages. He will find many acute observations forcibly expressed, and presumably accurate, upon German history, contemporary and recent. He will find many observations forcibly expressed, but most certainly inaccurate, upon foreign history, contemporary and recent. He will throughout find himself in the presence of a vigorous personality, with clear-cut views about the future of his country and the methods whereby they are to be realised, but he will not

[1] II. 72.

find breadth of view, generous sympathies, or systematic thought. In Treitschke there is nothing profound, and his political speculations are held together not so much by consistent thought as by the binding power of one ruling passion.

The result is curious and interesting. Treitschke was a man of wide, although not apparently of very accurate, knowledge. Fragments of Christianity, of Ethics, of Liberalism, are casually embedded in the concrete blocks out of which he has built his political system; but they are foreign bodies which do nothing to strengthen the structure. Power based on war is his ideal, and the verdict of war not only *must* be accepted, but *ought* to be accepted. The sentimentalist may regret that Athens fell before Sparta, that Florence dwindled before Venice, but the wise man knows better. Art and imagination do not contribute to Power, and it is only Power that counts. On it everything is based, by it everything is justified. It even supplies a short cut to conclusions which reason may hesitate to adopt. It required, as Treitschke observes, the battlefields of Bohemia and the Main to "convince" the German people that Prussia should control their destinies.[1]

It is not surprising that a man who held these views should regard with something like disgust

[1] I. 66.

and dismay the attempts of well-meaning persons to bring peace on earth. The whole tribe of pacifists who would substitute arbitration for war fill him with loathing. Like them he has his ideals, but they are of a very different order. His Utopia appears to be a world in which all small states have been destroyed, and in which the large states are all either fighting or preparing for battle. "War," he says, "will endure to the end of history. The laws of human thought and of human nature forbid any alternative, neither is one to be wished for." [1]

Deeply as he despised those who, in his own phrase, "rave about everlasting peace," there are transient moments in which he almost seems to fear them. Even the most robust faith will sometimes weaken; for a moment even Treitschke trembles at the thought that men may some day cease to cut each other's throats. "What," he pathetically asks, "if war should really disappear, and with it all movement and all growth?" [2] What if mankind should deliberately deprive itself of the "one remedy for an ailing civilisation"?

The thought is terrible, but, supported by religion, Treitschke's confidence remains unmoved. "Are not the great strides civilisation makes against barbarism and unreason only made actual

[1] I. 65. [2] I. 68.

by the sword?" [1] Does not the Bible say that "greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friend"? Are we then going to be seduced by the "blind worshippers of an eternal peace"? [2] No. Let us reject these unworthy thoughts: being well assured that "the God above us will see to it that war shall return again, a terrible medicine for mankind diseased." [3]

Since these lectures were delivered the longed-for medicine has been supplied to us in overflowing measure. Even the physician himself could hardly ask for more. Yet were he here to watch the application of his favourite remedy, what would he say of the patient?

[1] I. 65. [2] I. 65. [3] I. 69.

PART TWO: POLITICAL

VIII: THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

VIII

THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS[1]

The phrase "freedom of the seas" is, naturally, attractive to British and American ears. For the extension of freedom into all departments of life and over the whole civilised world has been one of the chief aspirations of the English-speaking peoples, and efforts towards that end have formed no small part of their contribution to civilisation. But "freedom" is a word of many meanings; and we shall do well to consider in what meaning the Germans use it when they ask for it, not (it may be safely said) because they love freedom, but because they hate Britain.

About the "freedom of the seas," in one sense, we are all agreed. England and Holland fought for it in times gone by; and it is, indeed, to their success that the United States may be said, without exaggeration, to owe its very existence.

For if, three hundred years ago, the maritime claims of Spain and Portugal had been admitted, whatever else North America might have been it

[1] Interview given to the American Press, May 1916.

would not have been English-speaking. It neither would have spoken the language, nor obeyed the laws, nor enjoyed the institutions, which, in the last analysis, are of British origin.

But the "freedom of the seas" desired by the modern German is a very different thing from the freedom for which our forefathers fought in days of old. How, indeed, can it be otherwise? The most simple-minded must feel suspicious when they find that these missionaries of maritime freedom are the very same persons who preach and who practise upon land the extremest doctrines of military absolutism.

Ever since the genius of Bismarck created the German Empire by Prussian rifles, welding the German people into a great unity by military means, on a military basis, German ambitions have been a cause of unrest to the entire world. Commercial and political domination, depending upon a gigantic army autocratically governed, has been and is the German ideal.

If, then, Germany wants what she calls the freedom of the seas, it is solely as a means whereby this ideal may receive world-wide extension. The power of Napoleon never extended beyond the coast line of Europe. Further progress was barred by the British fleets and by them alone. Germany is determined to endure no such limitations;

and if she cannot defeat her enemies at sea, at least she expects to paralyse their sea-power.

There is a characteristic simplicity in the methods by which she sets about attaining this object. She poses as a reformer of international law, though international law has never bound her for an hour. She objects to "economic pressure," when it is exercised by a superior fleet, though she sets no limit to the brutal completeness with which economic pressure may be imposed by a victorious army. She sighs over the suffering which war imposes upon peaceful commerce, though her own methods of dealing with peaceful commerce would have wrung the conscience of Captain Kidd. She denounces the maritime methods of the Allies, though in her efforts to defeat them she is deterred neither by the rules of war, nor the appeal of humanity, nor the rights of neutrals.

It must be admitted, therefore, that it is not the cause of peace, or of liberty which preoccupies her when in the name of freedom she urges fundamental changes in maritime practice. Her manifest object is to shatter an obstacle which hampers her ambitions, as more than a hundred years ago it hampered the ambitions of the masterful genius who was then her oppressor, as he is her model now.

But not along this path are peace and liberty to be obtained. Is it not plain that to paralyse naval

power and leave military power uncontrolled would be the worst injury which the misuse of international law could inflict upon mankind?

In the first place it would do nothing to relieve the world from the burden of armaments. Fleets would still be indispensable. But their importance, though not their cost, would diminish. Their offensive power would be relatively crippled. They could no longer be used to exercise pressure upon an enemy except in conjunction with an army. Thus the nations whose power depended on their navies would be partially disarmed, while the nations whose power depended on their armies would be stronger than before. So that aggressive powers like Germany and Austria would become more formidable than ever in attack, while the unaggressive powers like America or England would be weaker even in defence.

Imagine, for example, that Germany, in her desire to appropriate some Germanised portions of South America, came into conflict with the United States over the Monroe doctrine. The United States, with her small voluntary army, and with her navy bound by the new doctrine, could aim no blow at her enemy until she herself had created a large army and become for the time being a military community. Her sea-power would be useless

save for passive defence. Her land-power would not exist.

But more than this might happen, and worse. Let us suppose the desired change to have been effected. Let us suppose that the maritime nations, accepting the new situation, thought themselves relieved from all necessity of protecting their seaborne commerce, and arranged their programmes of naval shipbuilding accordingly. For some time war, when it occurred, would probably proceed on legal lines. Commerce, even hostile commerce, destroyed on land, would be safe at sea. But a change might happen. Some unforeseen circumstance might make the German General Staff think it to be to the interest of its nation to cast to the winds the "freedom of the seas" and, in defiance of the new law, to destroy the trade of its enemies.

No one, I suppose, is likely to suggest after our experience in this war, after reading German histories and German theories of politics, that Germany would be prevented from taking such a step by the mere fact that it was a breach of international treaties to which she was a party. She would never hesitate—and the only result of the cession by the pacific powers of their maritime rights would be that the military powers would seize the weapon for their own purpose and turn it against those who had too hastily abandoned it.

So weak is international law unaided by international authority!

While this state of things is permitted to endure, drastic changes in the law of nations may well do more harm than good; for if the new rules should involve serious limitations of belligerent rights, they would be broken as soon as it suited the interests of the aggressor; and his victim would be helpless because unprepared. Nothing could be more disastrous. Law that has no effective sanction is commonly useless; law which influences only the law-abiding may sometimes be dangerous. For if unsupported by powers it hampers everybody but the criminal.

Here we come face to face with the great problem which lies behind all the changing aspects of this tremendous war. When it is brought to an end, how is civilised mankind so to reorganise itself that similar catastrophies shall not be permitted to recur?

The problem is insistent, though its full solution may be beyond our powers at this stage of development.

But, surely, even now it is fairly clear that if substantial progress is to be made toward securing the peace of the world and a free development of its constituent nations, the United States of America and the British Empire should explicitly

recognise, what all instinctively know, that on these great subjects they share a common ideal.

I am well aware that in even hinting at the possibility of co-operation between these two countries I am treading on delicate ground. The fact that American independence was wrested by force from Great Britain colours the whole view which some Americans take of the "natural" relations between the two communities. Others are impatient of anything which they regard as a sentimental appeal of community of race; holding, truly enough, that in respect of important sections of the American people this community of race does not, in fact, exist. Others again object to any argument based on a similarity of laws and institutions, thinking, quite wrongly, that such considerations belittle the greatness of America's contribution to the political development of the modern world.

Rightly understood, however, what I have to say is quite independent of individual views on any of these subjects. It is based on the unquestioned fact that the growth of British laws, British forms of Government, British literature and modes of thought was the slow work of centuries; that among the co-heirs of these age-long labours were the great men who founded the United States; and that the two branches of the English-speaking peoples, after their political separation, developed

along parallel lines. So it has come about that whether they be friendly or quarrelsome, whether they rejoice in their agreements or cultivate their differences, they can no more get rid of a certain fundamental similarity of outlook than children born of the same parents and brought up in the same home. Whether, therefore, you study political thought in Great Britain or America, in Canada or in Australia, you will find it presents the sharpest and most irreconcilable contrast to political thought in the Prussian Kingdom, or in that German Empire into which, with no modification of aims or spirit, the Prussian Kingdom has developed. Holding, as I do, that this war is essentially a struggle between these two ideals of ancient growth, I cannot doubt that in the result of that struggle America is no less concerned than the British Empire.

Now, if this statement, which represents the most unchanging element in my political creed, has in it any element of truth, how does it bear upon the narrower issues upon which I dwelt in the earlier portions of this interview? In other words, what are the practical conclusions to be drawn from it?

My own conclusions are these: If in our time any substantial effort is to be made toward ensuring the permanent triumph of the Anglo-Saxon

ideal, the great communities which accept it must work together. And in working together they must bear in mind that law is not enough. Behind law there must be power. It is good that arbitration should be encouraged. It is good that the accepted practices of warfare should become ever more humane. It is good that before peace is broken the would-be belligerents should be compelled to discuss their differences in some congress of the nations. It is good that the security of the smaller states should be fenced round with peculiar care. But all the precautions are mere scraps of paper unless they can be enforced. We delude ourselves if we think we are doing God service merely by passing good resolutions. What is needed now, and will be needed so long as militarism is unconquered, is the machinery for enforcing them; and the contrivance of such a machinery will tax to its utmost the statesmanship of the world.

I have no contribution to make to the solution of the problem. Yet this much seems clear. If there is to be any effective sanction behind the desire of the English-speaking peoples to preserve the world's peace and the free development of the nations, that sanction must consist largely in the potential use of sea-power. So it has been in the past, so it will be in the future. For two generations and more after the last great war Britain was

without a rival on the sea; and it was during this period that Belgium became a state, that Greece secured her independence, that the unity of Italy was achieved, that the South American republics were established, that the Monroe doctrine came into being.

To me, therefore, it seems that the lesson to be drawn from history by those who love peace, freedom, and security, is not that Britain and America should be deprived, or should deprive themselves, of the maritime powers they now possess, but that, if possible, those powers should be organised in the interests of an ideal common to the two states, an ideal upon whose progressive realisation the happiness and peace of the world must, as I read the future, so largely depend.

PART TWO: POLITICAL

IX: THE FOUNDATIONS OF A DURABLE PEACE

IX

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A DURABLE PEACE[1]

FOREIGN OFFICE,
January 13, 1917.

SIR,

In sending you a translation of the Allied note, I desire to make the following observations which you should bring to the notice of the United States Government:

I gather from the general tenor of the President's note that, while he is animated by an intense desire that peace should come soon, and that when it comes it should be lasting, he does not, for the moment at least, concern himself with the terms on which it should be arranged. His Majesty's Government entirely share the President's ideals; but they feel strongly that the durability of the peace must largely depend on its character, and that no stable system of international relations can be built on foundations which are essentially and hopelessly defective.

[1]Dispatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington respecting the Allied Note of January 10, 1917.

This becomes clearly apparent if we consider the main conditions which rendered possible the calamities from which the world is now suffering. These were the existence of a Great Power consumed with the lust of domination, in the midst of a community of nations ill-prepared for defence, plentifully supplied indeed with international laws, but with no machinery for enforcing them, and weakened by the fact that neither the boundaries of the various states nor their internal constitution harmonised with the aspirations of their constituent races, or secured to them just and equal treatment.

That this last evil would be greatly mitigated if the Allies secured the changes in the map of Europe outlined in their joint note is manifest, and I need not labour the point.

It has been argued, indeed, that the expulsion of the Turks from Europe forms no proper or logical part of this general scheme. The maintenance of the Turkish Empire was, during many generations, regarded by statesman of world-wide authority as essential to the maintenance of European peace. Why, it is asked, should the cause of peace be now associated with a complete reversal of this traditional policy?

The answer is that circumstances have completely changed. It is unnecessary to consider

now whether the creation of a reformed Turkey mediating between hostile races in the near East was a scheme which, had the Sultan been sincere and the Powers united, could ever have been realised. It certainly cannot be realised now. The Turkey of "Union and Progress" is at least as barbarous and is far more aggressive than the Turkey of Sultan Abdul Hamid. In the hands of Germany it has ceased even in appearance to be a bulwark of peace, and is openly used as an instrument of conquest. Under German officers, Turkish soldiers are now fighting in lands from which they had long been expelled, and a Turkish Government, controlled, subsidised, and supported by Germany, has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria more horrible than any recorded in the history even of those unhappy countries. Evidently the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall, if possible, be brought to an end; and we may hope that the expulsion of Turkey from Europe will contribute as much to the cause of peace as the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, of Italia Irredenta to Italy, or any of the other territorial changes indicated in the Allied note.

Evidently, however, such territorial rearrangements, though they may diminish the occasions of

war, provide no sufficient security against its recurrence. If Germany, or rather those in Germany who mould its opinions and control its destinies, again set out to dominate the world, they may find that by the new order of things the adventure is made more difficult, but hardly that it is made impossible. They may still have ready to their hand a political system organised through and through on a military basis; they may still accumulate vast stores of military equipment; they may still perfect their methods of attack, so that their more pacific neighbours will be struck down before they can prepare themselves for defence. If so, Europe when the war is over will be far poorer in men, in money, and in mutual goodwill than it was when the war began, but it will not be safer; and the hopes for the future of the world entertained by the President will be as far as ever from fulfilment.

There are those who think that for this disease international treaties and international laws may provide a sufficient cure. But such persons have ill-learned the lessons so clearly taught by recent history. While other nations, notably the United States of America and Britain, were striving by treaties of arbitration to make sure that no chance quarrel should mar the peace they desired to make perpetual, Germany stood aloof. Her historians

and philosophers preached the splendours of war; power was proclaimed as the true end of the State; the General Staff forged with untiring industry the weapons by which, at the appointed moment, power might be achieved. These facts proved clearly enough that treaty arrangements for maintaining peace were not likely to find much favour at Berlin; they did not prove that such treaties, once made, could be utterly ineffectual. This became evident only when war had broken out; though the demonstration, when it came, was overwhelming. So long as Germany remains the Germany which, without a shadow of justification, overran and barbarously ill-treated a country it was pledged to defend, no state can regard its rights as secure if they have no better protection than a solemn treaty.

The case is made worse by the reflection that these methods of calculated brutality were designed by the Central Powers not merely to crush to the dust those with whom they were at war, but to intimidate those with whom they were still at peace. Belgium was not only a victim: it was an example. Neutrals were intended to note the outrages which accompanied its conquest, the reign of terror which followed on its occupation, the deportation of a portion of its population, the cruel oppression of the remainder. And lest

nations happily protected, either by British fleets or by their own, from German armies, should suppose themselves safe from German methods, the submarine has (within its limits) assiduously imitated the barbaric practices of the sister service. The War Staffs of the Central Powers are well content to horrify the world if at the same time they can terrorise it.

If, then, the Central Powers succeed it will be to methods like these that they will owe their success. How can any reform of international relations be based on a peace thus obtained? Such a peace would represent the triumph of all the forces which make war certain and make it brutal. It would advertise the futility of all the methods on which civilisation relies to eliminate the occasions of international dispute and to mitigate their ferocity. Germany and Austria made the present war inevitable by attacking the rights of one small state, and they gained their initial triumphs by violating the treaty-guarded territories of another. Are small states going to find in them their future protectors, or in treaties made by them a bulwark against aggression? Terrorism by land and sea will have proved itself the instrument of victory. Are the victors likely to abandon it on the appeal of the neutrals? If existing treaties are no more than scraps of paper, can fresh treaties help us?

If the violation of the most fundamental canons of international law be crowned with success, will it not be in vain that the assembled nations labour to improve their code? None will profit by their rules but the criminals who break them. It is those who keep them that will suffer.

Though, therefore, the people of this country share to the full the desire of the President for peace, they do not believe that peace can be durable if it be not based on the success of the Allied cause. For a durable peace can hardly be expected unless three conditions are fulfilled. The first is that the existing causes of international unrest should be as far as possible removed or weakened. The second is that the aggressive aims and the unscrupulous methods of the Central Powers should fall into disrepute among their own peoples. The third is that behind international law, and behind all treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities, some form of international sanction should be devised which would give pause to the hardiest aggressor. These conditions may be difficult of fulfilment, but we believe them to be in general harmony with the President's ideals, and we are confident that none of them can be satisfied, even imperfectly, unless peace be secured on the general lines indicated (so far as Europe is concerned) in the joint note. Therefore it is that

this country has made, is making, and is prepared to make sacrifices of blood and treasure unparalleled in its history. It bears these heavy burdens not merely that it may thus fulfil its treaty obligations, nor yet that it may secure a barren triumph of one group of nations over another. It bears them because it firmly believes that on the success of the Allies depend the prospects of peaceful civilisation and of those international reforms which the best thinkers of the New World, as of the Old, dare to hope may follow on the cessation of our present calamities.

I am, with great truth and respect, Sir,
Your Excellency's most obedient
humble servant,
ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

PART TWO: POLITICAL

X: A BRIEF NOTE ON ZIONISM

X

A BRIEF NOTE ON ZIONISM[1]

WHETHER it be helpful for one who is not a Jew, either by race or religion, to say even the briefest word by way of introduction to a book on Zionism is, in my own opinion, doubtful. But my friend, M. Nahum Sokolow, tells me that I long ago gave him reason to expect that, when the time came, I would render him this small measure of assistance; and if he attaches value to it, I cannot allow my personal doubts as to its value to stand in his way.

The only qualification I possess for this particular task is that I have always been greatly interested in the Jewish question, and that in the early years of this century, when anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe was in an acute stage, I did my best to support a scheme devised by Mr. Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary, for creating a Jewish settlement in East Africa, under the British flag. There it was hoped that Jews fleeing from persecution might found a community where, in harmony

[1] Being the Introduction to *The History of Zionism,* 1600-1918, by Nahum Sokolow.

with their own religion, development on traditional lines might (we thought) peacefully proceed without external interruption, and free from fears of violence.

The scheme was certainly well-intentioned, and had, I think, many merits. But it had one serious defect. It was not Zionism. It attempted to find a home for men of Jewish religion and Jewish race in a region far removed from the country where that race was nurtured and that religion came into being. Conversations I held with Dr. Weizmann in January 1906 convinced me that history could not thus be ignored, and that if a home was to be sought for the Jewish people, homeless now for nearly nineteen hundred years, it was only in Palestine that it could be found.

But why, it may be asked, is local sentiment to be more considered in the case of the Jew than (say) in that of the Christian or the Buddhist? All historic religions rouse feelings which cluster round places made memorable by the words and deeds, the lives and deaths, of those who brought them into being. And though without doubt these feelings should always be treated with respect, no one suggests that the regions where these venerable sites are to be found should, of set purpose and with much anxious contrivance, be colonised by the spiritual descendants of those who originally made

them famous. If the centuries have brought no change of ownership or occupancy we are well content. But if it be otherwise, we make no effort to reverse the course of history. None suggest that we should plant Buddhist colonies in the plains of India, or renew in favour of Christendom the crusading adventures of our mediæval ancestors. Yet, if this be wisdom when we are dealing with Buddhism and Christianity, why, it may be asked, is it not also wisdom when we are dealing with Judaism and the Jews?

The answer is, that the cases are not parallel. The position of the Jews is unique. For them race, religion and country are inter-related, as they are inter-related in the case of no other race, no other religion, and no other country on earth. In no other case are the believers in one of the greatest religions of the world to be found (speaking broadly) only among the members of a single small people; in the case of no other religion is its past development so intimately bound up with the long political history of a petty territory wedged in between states more powerful far than it could ever be; in the case of no other religion are its aspirations and hopes expressed in language and imagery so utterly dependent for their meaning on the conviction that only from this one land, only through this one history, only by this one people is full

religious knowledge to be spread through all the world. By a strange and most unhappy fate it is this people of all others which, retaining to the full its racial self-consciousness, has been severed from its home, has wandered into all lands, and has nowhere been able to create for itself an organised social commonwealth. Only Zionism—so at least Zionists believe—can provide some mitigation of this great tragedy.

Doubtless there are difficulties, doubtless there are objections—great difficulties, very real objections. And it is, I suspect, among the Jews themselves that these are most acutely felt. Yet no one can reasonably doubt that if, as I believe, Zionism can be developed into a working scheme, the benefit it would bring to the Jewish people, especially perhaps to that section of it which most deserves our pity, would be great and lasting. It is not merely that large numbers of them would thus find a refuge from religious and social persecution; but that they would bear corporate responsibilities and enjoy corporate opportunities of a kind which, from the nature of the case, they can never possess as citizens of any non-Jewish state. It is charged against them by their critics that they now employ their great gifts to exploit for personal ends a civilisation which they have not created, in communities they do little to maintain. The accu-

sation thus formulated is manifestly false. But it is no doubt true that in large parts of Europe their loyalty to the state in which they dwell is (to put it mildly) feeble compared with their loyalty to their religion and their race. How indeed could it be otherwise? In none of the regions of which I speak have they been given the advantage of equal citizenship, in some they have been given no right of citizenship at all. Great suffering is the inevitable result; but not suffering alone. Other evils follow which aggravate the original mischief. Constant oppression, with occasional outbursts of violent persecution, are apt either to crush their victims, or to develop in them self-protecting qualities which do not always assume an attractive shape. The Jews have never been crushed. Neither cruelty nor contempt, neither unequal laws nor illegal oppression, have ever broken their spirit or shattered their unconquerable hopes. But it may well be true that, where they have been compelled to live among their neighbours as if these were their enemies, they have often obtained, and sometimes deserved, the reputation of being undesirable citizens. Nor is this surprising. If you oblige many men to be moneylenders, some will assuredly be usurers. If you treat an important section of the community as outcasts, they will hardly shine as patriots. Thus

does intolerance blindly labour to create the justification for its own excesses.

It seems evident that, for these and other reasons, Zionism will mitigate the lot and elevate the status of no negligible fraction of the Jewish race. Those who go to Palestine will not be like those who now migrate to London or New York. They will not be animated merely by the desire to lead in happier surroundings the kind of life they formerly led in Eastern Europe. They will go in order to join a civil community which completely harmonises with their historical and religious sentiments: a community bound to the land it inhabits by something deeper even than custom: a community whose members will suffer from no divided loyalty, nor any temptation to hate the laws under which they are forced to live. To them the material gain should be great; but surely the spiritual gain will be greater still.

But these, it will be said, are not the only Jews whose welfare we have to consider. Granting, if only for argument's sake, that Zionism will on them confer a benefit, will it not inflict an injury upon others who, though Jews by descent, and often by religion, desire wholly to identify themselves with the life of the country wherein they have made their home? Among these are to be found some of the most gifted members of a gifted race. Their

ranks contain (at least, so I think) more than their proportionate share of the world's supply of men distinguished in science and philosophy, literature and art, medicine, politics and law. (Of finance and business I need say nothing.)

Now there is no doubt that many of this class look with a certain measure of suspicion and even dislike upon the Zionist movement. They fear that it will adversely affect their position in the country of their adoption. The great majority of them have no desire to settle in Palestine. Even supposing a Zionist community were established, they would not join it. But they seem to think (if I understand them rightly) that so soon as such a community came into being men of Jewish blood, still more men of Jewish religion, would be regarded by unkindly critics as out of place elsewhere. Their ancient home having been restored to them, they would be expected to reside there.

I cannot share these fears. I do not deny that, in some countries where legal equality is firmly established, Jews may still be regarded with a certain measure of prejudice. But this prejudice, where it exists, is not due to Zionism, nor will Zionism embitter it. The tendency should surely be the other way. Everything which assimilates the national and international status of the Jews to that of other races ought to mitigate what remains of ancient

antipathies: and evidently this assimilation would be promoted by giving them that which all other nations possess—a local habitation and a national home.

On this aspect of the subject I need perhaps say no more. The future of Zionism depends on deeper causes than these. That it will settle the "Jewish question" I dare not hope. But that it will tend to promote that mutual sympathy and comprehension which is the only sure basis of toleration I firmly believe. Few, I think, of M. Sokolow's readers, be they Jew or be they Christian, will rise from the perusal of the impressive story which he has told so fully and so well, without feeling that Zionism differs from ordinary philanthropic efforts in the depth and complexity of its appeal. That it will do a great spiritual and material work for that portion of the race which, for a second time in history, returns to its ancient home is, I think, obvious. But its effects will not be limited to a narrow strip of territory on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean sea. They will be world-wide. And among them I reckon a more complete and friendly amalgamation between the Jews who neither can, nor will, return to Palestine and the populations of their adopted countries. If I am right, then, indeed, Zionism is no mere local adventure, but a serious attempt to mitigate

the age-long miseries created for Western civilisation by the presence in its midst of a population too long regarded as alien and even hostile, which it has been equally unable to expel or to absorb. Surely, for this if for no other reason, Zionism should be supported by all men of good-will, whatever their country and whatever their creed.

THE END

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